CITY OF ROCKVILLE

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF ELECTIONS

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATION FORUM

MAYOR AND COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Thursday, September 7, 2017

1   PARTICIPANTS:

2   Board Members:

3   LOIS NEUMAN, Chair

4   GRAHAM JOHNSON

5   MELISSA JACKOWSKI

6   STEPHEN WEINER

7   Speakers:

8   MATT MASTERSON

9   JESSICA WHITE

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1   P R O C E E D I N G S

2   (6:30 p.m.)

3   CHAIR NEUMAN: We're delighted that you

4   are all able to join us for our second Elections

5   Administration Forum that builds on the

6   recommendations from our previous session, and I

7   know some you were here with us for that one. So,

8   we're growing, and we're delighted that you're all

9   back again.

10   You will notice we have two outstanding

11   speakers for us to hear from this evening, and

12   that was the result of discussions at the first

13   session.

14   Before I formally begin, let me just

15   state five things you need to know.

16   The restrooms. Straight out the door,

17   straight ahead, or to the right and to the right

18   -- both men's and women's.

19   Microphones. Please leave them on.

20   You'll see the green lights are on. When you

21   introduce yourself and when you have any

22   questions, you'll just speak directly into the

1   microphone.

2   We are videotaping. It will be on

3   channel 11. We have evaluations for you in the

4   packets that you

5   had on the table as you came in. We

6   appreciate your filling those out and turning them

7   in before you leave.

8   And, finally, food is here all evening,

9   so please feel free to get up at any time and help

10 yourself.

11   I would like to move on to introductions

12 and first introduce my colleagues on the Rockville

13 Board of Supervisors of Elections: Melissa

14 Jackowski, that end; Graham Johnson; and Steve

15 Weiner. We go in alphabetical order. (Laughter)

16 We are also very fortunate that councilmember for

17 the City of Rockville Beryl Feinberg is with us,

18 and she is at the end -- almost at the end of the

19 table.

20   Did you want to say --

21   MS. FEINBERG: I just wanted to say

22 thank you all for what you do each and every day

1   to make them have transparent and honest

2   elections. It's something we almost take for

3   granted but shouldn't. Having served on the

4   previous Board of Elections (inaudible), and

5   starting at four years old my mother took me with

6   her to elections (laughter) -- gosh -- so I think

7   it's in my DNA, but I remember the election

8   machines were (inaudible) curtain, so I know that

9   dates me, so thank you for coming tonight and

10   everything you do.

11   MR. ROBSON: (Inaudible) (laughter).

12   CHAIR NEUMAN: And finally, all of you.

13   We would like to have you know who each other is

14   and have you introduce yourselves. So, if we

15   could go around briefly and share your name and

16   your position, remember to speak into the

17   microphone. So, we will start at this end.

18   MR. ROBSON: Oh, good.

19   CHAIR NEUMAN: Okay, your last name

20   begins with a Z, huh?

21   MR. ROBSON: Jack Robson, and I'm chief

22   election supervisor, City of College Park, College

1   Park Board of Election Supervisor, all volunteers.

2   We are not -- well, actually I get paid $500 a

3   year, but that's left over from a long time ago.

4   So, we're basically all volunteers.

5   CHAIR NEUMAN: And I'm Janeen Miller,

6   city clerk for the City of College Park.

7   MS. VISOCSKY: I'm Shannon Visocksy.

8   I'm city clerk for the City of Westminster.

9   MS. SHAW: Good afternoon. I'm Madeline

10 Shaw. I'm with the Town of Emmitsburg. I'm the

11 town clerk.

12   MS. REAMS: I'm Laura Reams, city clerk,

13 City of Hyattsville.

14   MS. HERNANDEZ: Awilda Hernandez, city

15 clerk for the City of Bowie.

16   MR. BARBER: Doug Barber, city clerk for

17 the City of New Carrollton.

18   MS. RAU: Kim Rau, city clerk, City of

19 Laurel.

20   MS. ANDERSON: Bonita Anderson, city

21 clerk, the City of Greenbelt.

22   MS. GREGORY: Pam Gregory. I'm Board

1   chair of the Board of Elections in Greenbelt.

2   MR. GILBERT: Steve Gilbert, Greenbelt

3   Board of Elections.

4   MS. EVANS: Patricia Evans, Board of

5   Elections, Greenbelt.

6   MR. PAYNE: John Payne. I'm the newest

7   member of the Board of Election Supervisors,

8   College Park.

9   MR. VILLAO: I'm Carlos Villao. I'm

10   with the City of Gaithersburg, Board of

11   Supervisors of Elections.

12   MR. SNYDER: I'm Bill Snyder, City of

13   Gaithersburg, Board of Supervisors of Elections.

14   MS. BOARD: Hi, I'm Lynn Board, City of

15   Gaithersburg, city attorney.

16   MS. KLINGLER: I'm Lauren Klingler. I

17   work for the City of Gaithersburg as their

18   elections clerk.

19   MR. ALBRIGHT: Bill Albright, City of

20   Gaithersburg, Board of Supervisors and Elections.

21   MS. SABOL: Mary Grace Sabol, and I'm

22   soon to be executive assistant to Kathleen Conway

1   for City of Rockville.

2   MS. CARPENTER: Jessie Carpenter, city

3   clerk for the City of Takoma Park.

4   MR. BRECHER: Finian Brecher, intern for

5   the City of Fairfax.

6   MR. ERNST: I'm Brian Ernst. I'm the

7   chair of the Takoma Park Board of Elections.

8   MR. OLSON: Arthur David Olson, Takoma

9   Park Board of Elections.

10   MS. MILLMAN: Carol Millman, former

11   member of the Board of the Board of Supervisors

12   and Elections for the City of Rockville, in the

13   process of moving to Arlington, Virginia.

14   (Groaning, laughing)

15   MR. JOHNSON: I'm Graham Johnson. I'm

16   on the Board of Supervisors of Elections for City

17   of Rockville.

18   MR. WEINER: Steve Weiner, Board of

19   Supervisors of Elections, City of Rockville.

20   CHAIR NEUMAN: And I'm Lois Neuman, the

21   chair of the Board of Elections for the City of

22   Rockville NEUMAN: Thank you and, again, welcome.

1   We will hear from both speakers, followed by

2   questions and comments in an open question-and-

3   answer session.   Our speakers represent the

4   national and local perspective that is the country

5   and the county.

6   Our first speaker, U.S. Election

7   Commission Chair, Matt Masterson, is considered an

8   expert on elections administration throughout Ohio

9   and the country.   He oversees the Election

10   Commission's mission to provide a clearinghouse of

11   election administration best practices, administer

12   voluntary voting machine certification system, and

13   survey election administration practices.   He will

14   share with us his vision on the future of

15   elections.

16   Matt.

17   MR. MASTERSON: Well, thank you all, and

18   I can tell you what a privilege it is to be here.

19   Thank you so much for the invite and to Kathleen

20   for sticking with me, making sure we get it

21   scheduled.

22   What I hope to do today is provide a

1   national perspective, a little bit on where we are

2   voting technology, where I think we're going, and

3   a little bit of a tale, and the reason that I have

4   the yin and the yang on the slide is something

5   that election officials deal with every day but a

6   little bit of the tale that's come out of this

7   last election of security versus access. So,

8   talking a little bit about our current threat

9   environment, risk environment that we existing --

10   coming out of this last election, and kind of an

11   honest look at that as we look at serving voters,

12   because in the end the focus of all of this is

13   providing services to voters -- right? -- making

14   sure that voters have an experience, a voting

15   experience that allows them to have confidence in

16   the process, to feel like their voice was heard,

17   and move forward. So, I hope I can provide that

18   perspective. I look forward to most engaging you

19   all in questions and answers afterwards. It's

20   where I think there's a (inaudible) that the EAC

21   do our best work is listening to election

22   officials and trying to provide information and

1   best practices based on that.

2   For those that don't -- how many in the

3   room are at least familiar with the Election

4   Assistance Commission? It's okay to be honest. I

5   don't take it personally at all.

6   Oh, a good number. A good number.

7   That's awesome. So, for those -- quickly -- that

8   don't know, we're a

9   bipartisan federal agency that was

10 created after the 2000 election. We have three

11 main tasks. The first is to provide a voluntary

12 testing and certification program for voting

13 systems. So, we develop standards. We accredit

14 laboratories, and then we test and certify voting

15 systems in a voluntary manner. So, states and the

16 manufacturers choose how to use our program. 47

17 out of 50 states use some part of our program, so

18 some states require full certification with that

19 sticker on the voting system, which I think --

20 correct me if I'm wrong -- is the case in

21 Maryland?

22   Yes? She's like: I think so, I don't

1   know.

2   SPEAKER: No.

3   MR. MASTERSON: Ohio that was the case.

4   In some states they just require testing by one of

5   our accredited laboratories; in some states

6   they'll use our standards but do their own testing

7   in a variety of ways. And so it's meant to be a

8   service to the state and local election officials

9   to at least baseline the functionality of the

10   systems -- the security, the accessibility, the

11   overall accuracy of the systems. And so that's

12   the first thing we do.

13   The second is we provide best practices

14   and information on election administration. We're

15   a clearinghouse of that. So, if you were to go to

16   EAC.gov and check out our website, you'd see a

17   variety of resources on everything from serving

18   voters with disabilities to securing voter

19   registration databases to providing services for

20   military and overseas voters to list maintenance

21   -- you name it. Poor worker training and

22   recruitment is a big focus for us, because we know

1   that's a constant challenge. So, anything and

2   everything for election officials and voters, some

3   look-up tools and whatnot for voters and

4   registration information.

5   And then finally we do the Election

6   Administration and Voting Survey, which is a

7   collection -- the largest collection of election

8   administration data done in the United States.

9   It's over a million datapoints from all fifty

10   states and the four territories on everything from

11   provisional balloting to early voting to voting

12   machine types -- you name it, we collect it, and

13   it's at times a challenge I know for the states

14   and locals, but it really serves as sort of a

15   census on where we are in election administration.

16   I'll actually share some of the data here today as

17   we talk about the future of election technology.

18   So, with that -- that's the EAC. I

19   promise I won't go back to the commercial. I'm

20   done with the commercial part of the EAC, but I do

21   encourage you -- I've got cards with me - -

22   contact us any time. We're here to serve election

1   officials. Our job is to serve you all and

2   voters. We're a staff of about 27 people, and so

3   all of us engage every day with election

4   officials, and that's what we like about the job.

5   So, with that, I'm going to start by

6   setting the scene post-2016 and talking about

7   where we are and then look at sort of the

8   technology and how I think that's going to be

9   impacted, and then we'll do questions and answers

10   hopefully to get into the discussion.

11   So, Election Day 2016. I'm sure all of

12   you were familiar in the run-up. I've never seen

13   a run-up to an election like 2016. There were

14   conversations about hacking and rigging and

15   physical security at polling places, right?

16   Sometimes I even forget that that was a large

17   discussion at the time and conversations around

18   the process, but we made it. We made it to

19   Election 2016, and we were focused on where, when,

20   and how to vote, and by many accounts, talking to

21   election officials, the presidential election from

22   an administration standpoint went as smoothly as

1   any election that they had run. And that's a real

2   credit to the election officials across the

3   country. They were confronted with challenges and

4   constant conversation about a variety of topics,

5   and they stepped up and ran a really good process.

6   And usually after an election when you

7   have that -- you close out the books, you go

8   through your canvass, and you at least get week to

9   kind of debrief and decompress. That wasn't the

10   case this time. It hasn't stopped since, has it?

11   We've continued the conversation. In many ways

12   that's good; in many ways, that's a huge challenge

13   for election administrators across the country.

14   You all have been faced with headlines

15   like this: Russia hacked voting systems in 39 or

16   was it 21. Are you one of the states? How do you

17   know if you're one of the states? Has anyone told

18   you that your systems experienced one of these?

19   In many cases, election officials at both the

20   state and local levels are being presented with

21   headlines that they didn't even know something

22   happened -- right? -- they hadn't been alerted.

1   And so you all have been challenged:

2   How do I respond to this? What question are you

3   asking me? What do you, you know, say has

4   happened, and what are you talking about, because

5   it's in this headline? And so you've been asked

6   to be responding to new issues without any

7   warning, without any information about really

8   serious threats to the election system when we

9   talk about nation-state actors. Whether it's

10   Russia, North Korea, or otherwise, those are

11   large-scale threats. And then you've got a

12   conversation that's continued around -- the cyber

13   attacks are going to get worse, and so the ongoing

14   conversation is not only what happened in 2016 but

15   what are you doing to prepare going forward? Have

16   you been trained on cyber security? What

17   resources are available to you? What steps have

18   you taken to secure the voter registration

19   databases, the voter look-up tools? And so this

20   conversation continues as you all are trying to

21   debrief from 2016 and look forward to serving your

22   voters this year and next.

1   But the threats aren't limited to just

2   what the headlines around the election are. The

3   reality is that the threats -- particularly for

4   nation-state actors, the security threats are ever

5   present in any IT system, and so the nation- state

6   threats like the "Wanna Cry" virus -- how many are

7   familiar or saw the news reports around "Wanna

8   Cry"? and the "Ransomware" attack that shut down

9   some hospitals and other? That could very easily

10   be election offices as well, because it wasn't

11   isolated and targeted at specific systems

12   necessarily but operating systems that are common

13   across computer platforms across the country.

14   And so those nation-state threats in the

15   security environment exist for election officials,

16   election offices just by the nature of being IT

17   providers. You all administer IT systems. And

18   it's your websites as well. This comes from my

19   home state of Ohio, and these aren't nation-state

20   actors but these are more malicious actors --

21   right? -- ISIS in this case defacing the website

22   just to discredit -- right? -- to draw some sort

1   of confusion or to undermine confidence in the

2   governmental structure, whether that's elections

3   or otherwise. And so this is now part of your

4   threat profile and defense profile.

5   It's not about one country or one actor;

6   it's about the fact that sophisticated, complex

7   actors are targeting systems that could include or

8   do include election systems. And this is a new

9   operating environment for you. Election officials

10   have thought about security for years and have

11   worked really hard to secure systems in a variety

12   of ways, including physical security, logical

13   security, whatnot. But this introduces a new

14   sophistication and complexity to your world.

15   And then there's a recognition that you

16   all don't really get a whole lot of resources, do

17   you? You don't get a lot of support. The last

18   federal funding provided for elections was from

19   HAVA back in 2002, and state and local officials

20   typically are vying against lots of other areas to

21   get the resources you need not only to replace

22   aging equipment but to secure your systems, to

1   provide accessible polling places, and so on.   And

2   so you all are asked to defend yourselves and

3   protect your systems with very limited resources.

4   I had an election official tell me once

5   that they were trying to get an upgrade to one of

6   their systems but they lost out to the gazebo in

7   the park, right?   And you all know that.   You know

8   you're not typically viewed as essential in

9   needing that support, and so this challenge

10   remains even as you look at this.

11   And then you're going to have to respond

12   to the next headline -- and I love this, because

13   it kind of advertises the fact that you don't know

14   what the next headline coming your way is.   You

15   don't know the next question you're going to be

16   asked or the next reality for your job, and so

17   you're having to anticipate the things you're

18   going to be asked to respond to moving forward.

19   And so it -- not only are you responding to what

20   happened before, but you're being asked to respond

21   to things that you don't even know are coming.

22   So, how do you cope?   How do you move

1   forward? Well, the challenge for you I think as

2   election officials is to identify those things

3   that matter, those things that are within your

4   control, truly within your control, and where that

5   mesh point is so that you can identify priorities.

6   And so we'll talk a little bit about those

7   priorities as we look at technology in the future

8   moving forward and perhaps some techniques that

9   can help.

10   This is my favorite slide to show to

11 election officials. This is what a typical state

12 or local election office looks like as far as the

13 complexity of the IT systems. So, I like showing

14 this, because when people ask election officials

15 -- spouses or otherwise -- what do you do the

16 other 364 days a year? You only work one day a

17 year. You know, you could point to this and say:

18 Actually, these are just the IT systems I have to

19 run in my office. This is how complex my job is.

20 In many states or counties, in many counties, the

21 county IT office -- so, even in some cities -- the

22 elections office has the most IT systems of any of

1   the offices. When you add up the voting machines,

2   which are IT systems, as well as voter

3   registration databases -- e-poll books, ballot-on-

4   demand printers -- you know, you name it on this

5   slide -- the reality for you all -- your reality

6   is that you all are complex IT system managers.

7   Gone are the days -- and someone

8   referenced lever machines before, which I love --

9   gone are the days of the lever machine, right?

10 You all are administering complex systems, and

11 that is important and we'll talk a little bit why

12 that's important and why we've trended that way.

13 But it's part of your reality now, and so election

14 officials now can no longer say: Well, I'm not an

15 IT person; I'm not really an IT person; I leave

16 the technical to so-and-so. The reality is your

17 job now requires you to understand the IT systems

18 within your office, and so securing those,

19 understanding those is part of your job now.

20   So, that kind of concludes the current

21 state, the security, and I raise that because the

22 next part is going to talk about the future and

1   sort of where the trends are. But the reality is

2   that coming out of 2016 our environment, the fact

3   that we're talking about having to secure systems

4   against sophisticated attackers is going to impact

5   the future of elections. Some of the trends that

6   we see, some of the trends that we thought we'd

7   see -- I'm sure many of you were asked, for

8   instance, about Internet voting -- this new

9   reality is going to greatly impact your risk

10 environment and decision- making around new

11 systems. And so I think some of the decisions you

12 all would have thought you would have made before

13 this are now impacted by that security

14 environment. So, does that make sense, given

15 where we are?

16   So, with that, this is sort of a quote

17 from one of the best election officials I know,

18 Neil Kelly in Orange County, Ohio, and he says --

19 you know, we were talking about serving voters,

20 improving the election process, and he said:

21 Look, Matt, voters are just looking to get their

22 ballots on their terms: when they want to vote,

1   how they want to vote. They want to get their

2   ballot and vote it on their terms. And so that

3   thought process, that voter-centric design is now

4   driving a lot of election administration

5   decisions. We see across states in law changes,

6   in process changes, in procedure changes a trend

7   towards trying to serve the voters when they are

8   ready to vote as opposed to that one singular day,

9   that is, Election Day. Put another way, someone

10   said to me: You know, voters want to vote in the

11   way they live their lives, right? Smart phones

12   and convenience voting and the ability to interact

13   on mobile devices are really impacting, and the

14   reality is other government services are now being

15   provided that way, and so they just assume that

16   voting is going to turn that way for them as well.

17   But of course you've got that complex security

18   environment to tackle as we look at this.

19   So, what does the data tell us about the

20   trends in the future of voting? And this comes

21   from the AEC's Election Day survey, so this comes

22   directly from the states and locals as they report

1   it. First is, in the last election we had

2   percent of the U.S. civilian voting age

3   population were just over 140 million voters vote

4   in the last election. About 214 million citizens

5   are registered, so the registration rate was

6   actually increased 6 percent from the prior

7   election, even as turnout remained basically the

8   same, a little bit higher, but basically the same.

9   So, folks were registering more, but then, you

10   know, not voting at the rate that at least someone

11   expected them to.

12   Online voter registration. So, one of

13   those convenience voter services trying to serve

14   voters in a way that they live their lives has

15   taken off. 17.4 percent, which may not sound like

16   a lot, is a huge jump from just 2014 when it was

17   only 6.5 percent. And at this point, the majority

18   of states -- a large majority of states -- now

19   offer online voter registration. So, it's an

20   expectation in elections now that voters are going

21   to be able to register to vote online.

22   More than 41 percent of ballots -- that

1   should say "cast"; I apologize for the typo --

2   were cast before Election Day. So, 41 percent of

3   voters voted prior to Election Day. Again,

4   speaking to this desire for voters to vote when

5   they want to, and so I know here in Maryland as a

6   Maryland voter that's an option here in Maryland,

7   and it's becoming increasingly popular across the

8   country, and that's whether you're voting early by

9   mail or having early voting or in- person absentee

10   voting option.

11   930,000 UOCAVA ballots were transmitted

12   from military and overseas voters for those not

13   familiar, so absentee, military, and overseas

14   voters were 68.1 percent returned. And the

15   significance of that is in part that since 2010

16   military and overseas voters, in federal elections

17   at least, have to have the option to receive their

18   ballots electronically, so receive them, not

19   necessarily return them, although in some states

20   you can do that as a military or overseas voter.

21   And so we see an uptick in the number of voters

22   that want to take advantage of that. Of course

1   here in Maryland there's an option, at least I

2   think at the state level, for voters to request

3   their ballots and receive them electronically if

4   they choose. And so that's one of those

5   convenience trends that we're seeing as we look at

6   the trends moving forward.

7   2.4 million provisional ballots cast,

8   with percent coming from California -- so, one

9   state accounting

10   for the provisional ballots, with 71

11   percent counted. Part of what that tells us is,

12   one, California had a lot of provisional ballots,

13   but two is that the lists are being better

14   maintained, that programs like ERIC, which I know

15   Maryland is engaged in, are allowing election

16   officials to maintain the lists more accurately,

17   which is resulting in voters getting regular

18   ballots instead of provisional ballots and being

19   able to engage the process and have their

20   information updated more regularly so they're

21   receiving their ballot.

22   And that's important not just from a

1   list maintenance standpoint but from a voter

2   service standpoint. You all have experienced when

3   a voter shows up and told they have to vote

4   provisionally even if they go through that

5   process, frequently they're discouraged. They

6   want to know what went wrong in the process: Why

7   wasn't my information just updated. Research

8   shows that most voters assume that their

9   registration information is automatically updated

10   no matter where they move -- in-state, out of

11   state, in-county, out of -- they just assume:

12   Once I register once, that will just follow me

13   wherever I go. And so that's a unique challenge

14   that election officials have begun to tackle with

15   online voter registration, with some work done

16   with DMV, with automatic registration, or with

17   updated motor voter registration.

18   And then from 2012 to 2016 there was a

19   75 percent increase in the use of electronic poll

20   books. And I know they're used here in Maryland.

21   Electronic poll books have become not just an

22   important efficiency measure for election

1   officials, but it again speaks to voters when they

2   engage in the process and see that kind of modern

3   technology begin to recognize the process more.

4   Checking in and having someone look your name up

5   in the book is becoming less common, and they're

6   seeing you all use tablets or other devices to

7   check them in and be able to direct them to their

8   correct polling place if they're in the wrong

9   polling place. Many of the e- poll books will

10   have mapping features, right? So, you could say

11   I'm sorry, you're in the wrong place but I can

12   actually tell you exactly how to get to your

13   correct polling place. And so that's new services

14   for voters, new technology for you all to

15   administer and secure though.

16   So, just quickly, to go through this,

17   this is the current kind of makeup of voting

18   systems across the country. Paper ballots versus

19   DREs with a VVPAT -- obviously, Maryland made the

20   switch to all paper relatively recently. The

21   trend across the country is to move toward some

22   sort of paper-based or auditable system. Just

1   short of 80 percent of the ballots cast in this

2   last election had some sort of corresponding paper

3   record with them, whether that's a VVPAT or a

4   hand- marked paper ballot or a ballot marked on a

5   ballot marking device, either remotely or

6   otherwise.

7   This is just a typical system. I know

8   you all have it. I like to show this system in

9   part, because one of the things -- if you see the

10   kind of a hood on it, and it's sitting there, it

11   allows a voter to not only verify -- so it marks

12   the ballot and marks a physical paper record and

13   shows it to the voter. But then once the voter

14   verifies it, it'll drop it through the scanner

15   without them having to touch it, without them

16   having to handle it.

17   And this is particularly important,

18   because one of the unique challenges with voting

19   is that it's required and it needs to be done

20   privately and independently. So, voters with

21   disabilities are afforded the right to vote

22   privately and independently, without their

1   assistance, and so paper ballots at times can

2   challenge that. Someone who's blind, someone who

3   has manual dexterity issues, whatnot, paper is not

4   an ideal solution for them, right? And so the

5   elections community, those of us at the EAC and

6   states and locals, have demanded from the vendor

7   community more accessible solutions, and so this

8   is one of those approaches where the voter never

9   has to handle the ballot to be able verify it and

10   submit it through the scanner.

11   This is another example. It's a ballot

12   marking device. It's familiar to you in Maryland,

13   right? The DS200 and the -- I'm blanking on the

14   --

15   The Express Vote, thank you -- I almost

16   said E-Vote and I'm, like, I don't to say that.

17   But down on the bottom there, the

18   yellow, that's a prototype -- and this is

19   interesting and important as we look at the future

20   of election technology -- that is a prototype of a

21   system designed and built by LA County, so Los

22   Angeles County, California.

1   Los Angeles is building their own voting

2   system. To give perspective on that, Los Angeles

3   County, if it were a state, would be the 13th

4   largest state in the country. It is by far and

5   away the largest voting jurisdiction in the

6   country, and so they have resources. They have

7   things like a county IT department and have been

8   able to dedicate money to developing their own

9   voting system, and the starting point of that

10   development for their new voting system is the

11   voter experience.

12   And so the first thing they did was

13   engage a contractor and went out and asked voters:

14   How do you think you should be able to vote? What

15   should the voting process look like? Feel like?

16   Advance for you? And so one of the overwhelming

17   results of that research was that voters want to

18   vote when they want, but they also want to engage

19   using devices or technology that they want.

20   So, the design, the prototype of this

21   would allow someone to bring in an already marked

22   sample ballot on their I-phone, scan it. It will

1   produce a paper record that they can verify,

2   confirm, and drop. And, actually, the Express

3   Vote has technology like that that some states

4   allow the use of or not. And so the idea is that

5   the voter can interact and make their decisions in

6   their own home but still have the experience of

7   going to a polling place or going to a vote center

8   to vote. And the research that they did in

9   academic research is that, to many Americans, the

10 communal experience of going to the polling place

11 is a significant one.

12   So, someone already mentioned: My

13 mother took me with her to go vote. Right? And

14 so that is a very Norman Rockwell American

15 experience and incredibly important to millions of

16 Americans.

17   And so when LA County was doing this

18 research, that ability to do that was important to

19 a lot of people. And so they want to serve that.

20 California, like many states, is moving largely to

21 vote-by-mail, but they still want to offer an

22 opportunity that even if you get your ballot in a

1   variety of ways, you can show up in person and

2   vote so that they can bring their children and

3   engage in the process.

4   Early and absentee voting. It's here.

5   It is popular. Again, more than 40 percent of

6   people voted either early -- voted before Election

7   Day, and it's used in a variety of ways across the

8   states. So, some states still -- someone

9   mentioned -- someone might be here from Virginia,

10   but Virginia remains -- you've got to provide an

11   excuse. Although, there are many excuses, and I

12   don't think they're checked terribly closely but

13   -- in other states -- in many states you don't

14   have to provide an excuse. So, the trend is

15   towards early and absentee voting. Of course the

16   amount and types vary state by state drastically.

17   And that means different technology.

18   So, the embrace of early and absentee voting means

19   the embrace of new types of scanners. So, this is

20   a high-speed scanner.

21   How many are familiar with high-speed

22   scanners like this? So, a few of you.

1   This is designed to process quickly

2   centrally counted ballots -- so, absentee and

3   early ballots. So, this machine, when you fire it

4   up -- and there's a variety of different

5   manufacturers that make these -- it sounds like a

6   jet engine, honestly. It's got a high-speed motor

7   in it. It scans the ballots as it goes, collects

8   the ballot images, and counts -- and you can do

9   thousands of ballots per hour using this. And

10   this was a result of early and absentee voting --

11   the increase in early and absentee voting --

12   because no longer were you scanning ballots at the

13   polling place but you were counting them centrally

14   as you received them back.

15   Vote centers. In 2006/2007, the general

16   consensus was that vote centers was the next big

17   thing in elections, that they would allow for

18   efficiency of voters to go to a variety of central

19   locations across a county or jurisdiction, get

20   their ballots (inaudible) and voted when they

21   wanted.

22   I think both resources in technology as

1   well as some challenges that folks have found --

2   that vote centers haven't taken off completely,

3   but the concept behind them has. So, the idea

4   that voters could go to a variety -- instead of

5   going to a singular polling place on Election Day

6   could go to a variety of locations across a county

7   when convenient. So, if they're out shopping at

8   the supermarket and the vote center is located

9   next door, they could drop, go ahead and vote

10   while they're there, and move on.

11   And so, particularly with early voting,

12   in many states vote centers are utilized. The

13   Colorado model -- what's now known as the Colorado

14   model -- although Oregon and Washington I think

15   would object in many cases, so Colorado has moved

16   to a largely vote-by-mail jurisdiction. So, they

17   mail ballots to all registered voters, but they

18   provide a variety of options for those voters to

19   return it. And most voters, the majority of

20   voters, return it in person. So, they receive it

21   by mail but they like to go drop it off.

22   And so Colorado has, across its

1   counties, a certain number of what's called voter

2   assistance centers that are essentially vote

3   centers where you can drop your mail ballot. You

4   can go vote on an actual physical machine, so this

5   is an example of Denver and their vote center, so

6   you can vote physically if you want that

7   experience of voting on a machine. It also

8   provides full accessibility, so voters with

9   disabilities can go to any of the voter assistance

10 centers and interact.

11   So, the key to that for Colorado is

12 first they have the poll books so that the picture

13 you see on the top there -- there's the check-in

14 stations, and Colorado offers another service to

15 voters that impacts the technology they use. They

16 offer same-day registration. So, you could show

17 up, register to vote. It automatically checks you

18 in to the statewide system, and then you go over

19 to the machine or you drop your - - you know,

20 whatever you need to do to get your ballot,

21 interact, and vote. And so Colorado has gone to a

22 very voter- centric approach. They've seen their

1   provisional ballots drop -- and I may get this

2   number wrong, but around 200 percent. They had

3   virtually no provisional ballots largely because

4   of same-day registration but also because of some

5   of the list maintenance work they've done and the

6   voters were able to vote.

7   The other interesting thing that speaks

8   to the future of voting technology is their system

9   -- and it's going to be a statewide system in

10   Colorado, so Colorado is moving to a statewide

11   voting system. Their voting system, like the one

12   you see on the screen and the back-end tally

13   system utilizes commercial off-the-shelf products.

14   So, instead of a monolithic voting system, that's

15   proprietary -- right? -- made by a company with

16   proprietary hardware and software. The hardware

17   used in Colorado could be purchased on Best Buy or

18   Amazon, and then they load the software up on

19   there. So, the printer, the touchscreen -- so

20   they use a tablet touchscreen and then the printer

21   that prints it, as well as even the beveling

22   system that holds the tablet -- that's all

1   commercial off-the-shelf. So, the only thing they

2   use the vendor for is the purchase of software to

3   load on those systems, and that has really

4   important efficiency implications for election

5   officials so the ability for them to upgrade --

6   tablets for instance -- is much more efficient but

7   it also has implications as they manage the

8   system. So, instead of having a system that's

9   been tested and certified and sitting right there

10   in front of you introducing a tablet -- how many

11   of you have iPads or a tablet at home?

12   So, a good number of you. How many of

13   you have it just to update -- software

14   update whenever it's ready -- so, update

15   overnight when you plug it in, right? Well,

16   that's awesome and convenient for you as someone

17   that owns a tablet. When you're talking election

18   systems, it can break the system, right? If

19   things could not work, how many times have you

20   lost connectivity with your wireless printer

21   because of a system update and you're, like, what

22   happened?

1   Well, for election officials on election

2   day, if those things update overnight you could

3   have a serious problem when you show up in the

4   morning. And so there's a system integration

5   challenge for election officials with commercial

6   off-the-shelf products.

7   There's a challenge. Now you all serve

8   as the system integrator. You all have to test

9   the systems and make sure that you have the

10   setting set so that the Wi-Fi is not turned on, so

11   that the updates aren't done automatically, so

12   that, you know, it's not -- it doesn't have

13   applications that it shouldn't have on it, because

14   you're just purchasing them off the shelf. And so

15   for some jurisdictions, that works wonderfully.

16   Colorado -- the state helps administer that and

17   manage it. For other jurisdictions, if you don't

18   have IT support, if you don't have the time to

19   manage that, that has very real implications and

20   challenges. So, there's a cost benefit that goes

21   with commercial off-the-shelf but I think it's a

22   trend we're going to see almost certainly, and

1   election technology is a move towards using

2   commercial off-the-shelf products (1) because

3   they're affordable but (2) because they're

4   familiar to voters. Voters recognize an iPad or

5   some sort of tablet device in that way, and I

6   think election officials like to provide that.

7   Interestingly with Denver, they've just

8   recently set up a program with their school system

9   where when they upgrade their tablets, they're

10   going to provide the old tablets to the school

11   systems in Denver for the students, which is kind

12   of an awesome service, but also as election

13   officials argue for resources, the ability to --

14   how many election officials get told: We only use

15   the system once a year and then we pay to store

16   it, right? Or it sits in mothballs for seven

17   months out of the year. Well, now you've got the

18   ability to say: Well, you know, when we're done

19   with this, we'll be able to provide it to the

20   school system or the auditor's office or the

21   county commissioners, whoever it may be. And so

22   part of the selling point of COTS is this ability

1   to -- once we're done with it we can provide it

2   other places and use it, which a voting system --

3   a monolithic voting system doesn't necessarily

4   have.

5   All-mail elections, as I've talked

6   about, are becoming popular out West. I think the

7   significance of that is one that -- we see

8   vote-by-mail just increasing in general. In many

9   states, 30 to 35 percent of voters will take

10   advantage of vote-by-mail if it's offered to them,

11   and these states proactively mail out ballots to

12   everyone. Washington and Oregon have been doing

13   it for years, and if you talk --

14   How many -- is it random? -- how many

15   have talked to an election official from

16   Washington or Oregon? A couple? Man, do they

17   love vote-by-mail. I mean, it's all they talk

18   about. You want to talk about lunch and they want

19   to talk about vote-by-mail. But they really love

20   it, and their citizens love it, and it's working

21   well for their state. And so vote-by-mail is big

22   out there. I think as you move east you see a

1   difference in culture as far as use of the mail

2   truck (skip in the recording) in the mail but it's

3   increasing across the country as far as just

4   general use.

5   Here's -- this is from Denver, and this

6   is an example -- actually, this is from another

7   county in Colorado I think -- this is an example

8   -- this is a gentleman that got his vote-by-mail

9   ballot in Colorado, and they set up bike- through

10   and drive-through drop-offs throughout the city

11   and state. Again, this trend towards serving

12   voters, right? This trend towards trying to meet

13   voters. So, they set up in the middle of the

14   street, flag it, cone it, and the majority of

15   voters in Colorado drop their ballots instead of

16   mailing them back. And so this is a way that they

17   try to serve those voters. It's kind of neat.

18   It's neat to watch, if you haven't been out there,

19   the variety of ways -- driver-through,

20   bike-through, walk-through -- in order to drop,

21   and they collect the ballots throughout the course

22   of the day.

1   And then e-poll books. We've already

2   talked a little bit about that. The trend is

3   absolutely towards using e-poll books. More and

4   more states are using them, which also means more

5   and more states are testing and certifying e-poll

6   books.

7   At the EC we only test voting systems;

8   we don't test the electronic poll books or voter

9   registration data bases. But more and more

10   states, particularly coming out of this last

11   election cycle, are finding the need to rigorously

12   test e-poll books and assess what risks do these

13   introduce into the environment? What services do

14   they provide? And how can we better secure them?

15   Because there's been a lot of

16   conversation around the voter registration

17   databases but also around -- if you were to mess

18   with e-poll books and change the list, what impact

19   would that have? And so that's a challenge I

20   think states and locals are struggling with now as

21   you look at e- poll books. But the fun part with

22   e-poll books is that they're efficient. They

1   allow you to accurately look people up, so the

2   ability to type in someone's last name and pull

3   the correct name as opposed to getting the line

4   wrong. And how many times have we seen where

5   someone signs on the wrong line, whatnot, as well

6   as really efficiently exports the data? So, when

7   you are done on Election Day, the ability to

8   export voter history and whatnot is super easy

9   into your voter registration database instead of

10 scanning barcodes for days on voter registration

11 lists, and again some of the voter services they

12 provide, it's almost -- I won't say it is

13 impossible -- it's almost impossible to do

14 same-day registration without some sort of e-poll

15 book, because you need that real-time lookup with

16 the voter registration database in order to do it,

17 as well as looking up voter locations and polling

18 places.

19   So, again, another piece of technology

20 as we talked about in the beginning, the security

21 threats. These are wonderful pieces of

22 technology, but now we're all having to assess

1   what risks do we introduce into the process? How

2   can we secure it? And the good news for election

3   officials is you all are really good about

4   thinking about what could go wrong.

5   Election officials spend a lot of time

6   asking themselves what could go wrong. How do I

7   fix it? And then mitigating that and then asking:

8   Okay, what else could go wrong. And so the

9   challenge I think for all of us in the elections

10   community is to take that mindset and apply it to

11   IT systems. How can we evaluate the risk to IT

12   systems, and what could go wrong?

13   Just to combine the yin and the yang

14   from this conversation, there's research that was

15   done from the Democracy Fund on voter confidence

16   or coming out of this last election, so this is

17   after the 2016 election. 85 percent of voters

18   said they had a pleasant experience on November

19   8th, that they had a pleasant voting experience

20   with 59 percent of respondents believing the

21   election was fairly determined or fairly

22   administered.

1   So, with all the conversation that we

2   were having before and has happened since, voters

3   still enjoy the voting process, engaged in it, and

4   felt like it was fairly administered. So, that's

5   the good. That's the yin and, generally speaking,

6   voters say about their election experience: Well,

7   in my county or in my city or in my township they

8   do a really good job, but those others ones -- I'm

9   not so sure about those other ones. Right? So,

10 they have confidence in their process, and that 85

11 percent number I think is significant, in part

12 because it speaks to this voter- centric approach

13 that's trending, this move towards early/absentee

14 voting and whatnot. Voters, more and more, are

15 having an experience that they enjoy at the polls.

16 And that's particularly significant coming out of

17 2012 when the conversation --

18   What was the theme of 2012, does anyone

19 remember? Every election kind of has a theme;

20 this one had about seven. Does anyone remember

21 the theme of 2012? Lines, right? Lines at the

22 polls. There was an entire presidential

1   commission created to address lines at the polls,

2   and what we see with this voter-centric approach

3   is an attempt to address that to give voters an

4   experience that they enjoy and have confidence in.

5   So, here's the yang, and I know it's a

6   little bit hard to read, but I'll give you the

7   gist, and that is almost half of voters who

8   believe the 2016 election was fairly determined

9   still express some concern regarding the

10   integrity, right? So, I think it was fair. I

11   think it was -- but I do have some questions, and

12   those questions -- and then that's -- the pie

13   charts here revolve around questions around fraud

14   or hacking or rigging -- electronic security

15   breach or hack impacted the vote counts. And so

16   what this tells in the story is as nice of an

17   experience as they had, as much confidence as they

18   may have in their own locality, voters still have

19   a lot of questions about the integrity and

20   security of the process. And I think what that

21   challenges us as election officials to do is to

22   hear that, to recognize that, and to ask ourselves

1   how we can address those concerns not only in, you

2   know, in a real sense of mitigating the threats

3   but then explain the process.

4   The beauty of the elections process is

5   it is administered locally, and so those who run

6   elections are also in voters' PTAs, are also

7   parents on each other's soccer teams, and so they

8   can engage. And so one of the things that I saw

9   election officials do in 2016 that I think will

10   continue is educating voters about how they can

11   get involved in the process -- and not just being

12   a poll worker, although that's ideal because the

13   you all get something out of it, too, but

14   opportunities to watch pre-election testing,

15   opportunities to engage as observers to watch vote

16   counts, post-election auditing opportunities, and

17   witnessing. And so I think, more and more, if

18   there's an election official that doesn't yet, you

19   all have to have that elevator card in your

20   pocket, that stump speech in your pocket about how

21   you're securing the process, what steps you take,

22   and how to encourage voters to get involved,

1   because having that readily available and the

2   ability to explain it simply about the steps you

3   take to secure the process is going to be

4   critically important moving forward, because you

5   all have put a lot of time and thought into this.

6   You all have spent a lot of time thinking and

7   working to secure the process, and now it's

8   incumbent on all of us to talk about the steps you

9   take in order to give voters that confidence

10 moving forward.

11   So, what is the future? All of this is

12 nice; what do I see as the future? Well, the

13 first is flexible configurable systems. And we

14 talked about it a little bit already. You're

15 going to see, more and more, I think, the use of

16 commercial off-the-shelf products. You're going

17 to see the use of systems that can be integrated

18 together seamlessly in order to better serve

19 voters. And that includes using data

20 compatibility or sharing.

21   So, one of the things that happened

22 after HAVA in the purchase of new voting systems

1   is that many election officials bought voting

2   systems and voter registration systems from the

3   same vendor thinking: Oh, this will be great;

4   they can share the same data, this will work. And

5   what they found is -- and, really, not through

6   fault of the vendor, which sounds funny -- the

7   data coming out of the voter registration system

8   wouldn't go into the voting system without having

9   to spend significant either time or money to make

10   them work together.

11   So, one of the efforts that's underway

12   is a common data format for election systems so

13   that you could issue reports out of a voter

14   registration system that can be loaded into e-poll

15   books automatically, or the voting system, where

16   auditing of election logs from the voting system

17   -- and that will allow for election officials in

18   the future, not next year or next week, to mix and

19   match components of voting systems.

20   So, in theory, moving forward in the

21   future, you would be able to purchase the best

22   scanner that you want to go with the best election

1   management system that you want to go with the

2   best e-poll book that you want and the data will

3   be exchanged in a way that allows those to work

4   together. But we are a little ways away from that

5   until that data format can be used, tested, and

6   implemented. But I think it's significant as you

7   look at the development of the next version of

8   voting systems.

9   There's a greater demand on election

10   officials as system integrators. If you want that

11   mix-and-match future, the reality is you all, at

12   the local level in particular, will have to know

13   how to test those systems to ensure they work well

14   together. All of us want to believe you could

15   just plug the printer in or hook up to the printer

16   and it'll work. Many of us have experienced the

17   hour to an hour and a half infuriating frustration

18   of it not printing because it won't connect,

19   right? And so that's going to be the challenge as

20   you try to integrate these systems together.

21   There's going to be a greater focus on

22   the voting experience. I think I've already

1   covered that a lot. There's a lot of conversation

2   around really understanding how voters want to

3   vote -- Colorado, LA county, a bunch of states --

4   looking at how to address that.

5   Universal design for accessibility. So,

6   I talked a lot about security and, I think, with

7   good reason. But making sure that the process is

8   open and available for all voters, including

9   military and overseas voters -- so absentee voters

10   and voters with disabilities -- is not only

11   important but it's required by law and the right

12   thing to do, and so I think more and more you're

13   going to see things like ballot delivery to voters

14   with disabilities happen, because that allows

15   voters with disabilities to use their own devices

16   to mark those ballots, and the best way to make it

17   accessible is to allow voters to use technology

18   that they're familiar with at least to mark and

19   verify that ballot. So, then there's a question

20   which goes into one of the next one's is

21   increasing the auditability. So, if you're going

22   to allow voters to interact with the ballot in a

1   variety of ways, how do we ensure that the systems

2   are auditable? And the purpose of an audit is to

3   ensure that the outcome of the election can be

4   confirmed.

5   Someone said one time that it's to

6   convince the loser that they lost. I actually

7   disagree. That's a nice thought, but it's to give

8   confidence, right? It's to be able to say with

9   confidence that the results are correct, and that

10 auditability and accessibility are the linchpin of

11 the future of election technology. The systems

12 are going to have to be auditable. You are going

13 to have to be able to show how you audited them,

14 but they're going to have to be accessible. They

15 have to be able to be available to voters and used

16 by voters.

17   So, a lot of people, I think, think of

18 that as the yin and the yang: How do we give this

19 voter-centric experience while still maintaining

20 security? I actually think that in a lot of ways

21 they work in conjunction with each other. A

22 system that's inaccessible -- a system that can't

1   be used by every voter -- is an insecure system.

2   You're blocking people from voting, which is the

3   equivalent of denying service to them, right? And

4   so ensuring that accessibility with auditability I

5   think is key.

6   And then sustainability. One of the

7   lessons learned from the HAVA systems is states

8   and locals were told: Go out and buy these

9   systems; we're going to give you a bunch of money,

10   go get yourself hooked on these systems. And then

11   that money was gone and they had 10-year-old

12   systems and they're left saying: What do I do?

13   How do I replace these systems? Ten years in the

14   information technology world is eons, right? And

15   so in many states -- not here in Maryland -- in

16   many states they're using systems that were

17   deployed three years before the first iPhone --

18   right? -- 2002, 2004. That, for information

19   technology, is old, and their systems have served

20   them well, but moving forward as we look at

21   election systems, I think states and counties

22   realize they can't be replacing their voting

1   systems every three, five, seven years. There's

2   no money to do so.

3   So, what are some approaches to make

4   these systems more sustainable? Again, using some

5   commercial off-the-shelf products or otherwise

6   that you can swap out older technology for new and

7   still continue to run elections. So, that --

8   those are the principles I think that are going to

9   guide the future of technology in elections and

10   building that security into the system. Any piece

11   of election technology now that's being designed,

12   built, and tested is going to have to demonstrate

13   that security was built from the beginning --

14   built into it from the beginning, not an after

15   thought.

16   So, what are the implications to you all

17   of that approach? One is that you're having to

18   manage all the systems that were on that slide

19   before, right? You all are the complex IT system

20   managers. You cannot push that to a vendor. The

21   expectation is you all are managing those. You

22   are risk analyzers, and the good news is you do

1   that already.   It's just applying that to IT

2   systems.

3   So, you're going to have to evaluate

4   current and future systems that -- to your

5   operating environment.   The challenge for you is

6   going to not only be how do we do things now but

7   how do I anticipate things are going to change

8   either in law and procedure or in process that

9   impacts the technology that I need for my office?

10   And so that anticipation, that ability

11   to kind of look towards the trends in the future,

12   is going to be important as you look to buy new

13   systems that you can build into your contracts and

14   get systems that serve you.

15   Education on the challenges and needs of

16   election officials and then protecting the data,

17   ensuring not only that you are taking the steps to

18   protect the data but that you can demonstrate that

19   you protected the data and show it.   And that's

20   going to be critically important moving forward,

21   because at -- there was a quote recently in a News

22   Times article where an advocate for voters said,

1   you know, there's no information that shows that

2   the systems were hacked, but there's also no

3   information that shows the systems weren't hacked.

4   And so that's -- you all are being asked to prove

5   the negative in that case, right? And so

6   embracing the transparency of the process as well

7   as being able to explain and show how you manage

8   data integrity is going to be critically

9   important.

10   And then, finally, embracing the fact

11   that every election is a pilot, and by that I mean

12   that every election we learn something new; every

13   election something goes wrong, right? Where there

14   are lessons learned -- and so being able to take

15   those lessons learned, adapted, and approved is

16   going to be important particularly as we deploy

17   more and more technology in an attempt to serve

18   voters in new ways.

19   No election official that I know of ever

20   rests on their laurels and goes: Well, we got it

21   down. We got this. It's perfect, right? So,

22   it's going to be a challenge to all of us to look

1   at the systems and ask ourselves: What did we

2   learn about them?   How did we improve?

3   So, one of the big recommendations that

4   I've had coming out of this election is that every

5   election office needs to be going back and looking

6   at all their policies and procedures with a lens

7   towards security: Have you updated your

8   chain-of-custody procedures?   And if so, how?

9   Have you updated your access control procedures?

10   Who has access to what data, and is it the amount

11   of access that they need?   Have you updated your

12   password procedures in your office?   Do you use

13   things like two-factor authentication, or do you

14   know what that is and how that could help your

15   office?

16   I also, as I've talked to election

17   officials, have encouraged them to really push

18   back and ask tough questions of their vendors

19   about how they secure and what security

20   procedures, because you're going to have to

21   explain that.

22   And then having incident response plans.

1   That's the other huge one, so all of you have

2   contingency of operations plans. All of you have

3   thought through okay, if there's no electricity or

4   if there's a big storm or if one of my polling

5   places catches fire. But have you thought about

6   if I receive a ransomware attack and I cannot

7   access my voter registration database. It's taken

8   away from me. Do I have a way to either rebuild

9   it or recover from that, and what is that plan?

10   So, having an incident response plan that covers

11   those contingencies from an IT standpoint is going

12   to be critical, your operation moving forward,

13   because all of us are going to be impacted by a

14   cyber incident whether it's directly -- so, your

15   office directly -- or another office that you rely

16   on or the state or a vendor. All of us are going

17   to be impacted by a cyber incident.

18   I was reading, before I came over here,

19   that one of the largest providers of identity

20   theft protection was -- just had 100+ million

21   records stolen from them. So, even the people

22   that protect data are having challenges. It's

1   just a reality, and part of our reality now as IT

2   system providers that are having to secure systems

3   is recognizing that incidents are going to happen.

4   They're going to happen, and we need to be

5   prepared with responses. And the good news for

6   election officials is you already do that; you

7   already think that way. It's just applying it to

8   your cyber capabilities.

9   That's what I've got. Am I on time?

10   CHAIR NEUMAN: You're good.

11   MR. MASTERSON: I'm good. I didn't even

12 see the giant clock in front of me. (Laughter) I

13 would love questions if we have time for

14 questions.

15   Okay, first, Jessica. I would love

16 Jessica to talk is what I would love, as I'm sure

17 you all would. (Laughter) Thank you. (Applause)

18   CHAIR NEUMAN: That's okay. We thank

19 Mr. Masterson for giving us lots of food for

20 thought. Our tummies are full, and are minds are

21 full, and we'll take questions and comments later.

22 He gave us lots to think about.

1   Next we'll hear from Montgomery County,

2   Board of Elections, Voter Service Manager Jessica

3   White. You wondered who was this lovely lady

4   sitting up front. Well, this is who she is.

5   She has more than 14 years' experience

6   in local government and worked six years at the

7   Johnson County Kansas Election Office, most

8   recently as assistant commissioner. With 40

9   elections conducted during 6 years, her

10   responsibilities included recruitment and

11   scheduling of more than 2000 election workers,

12   selecting and contracting 200 polling places,

13   developing cost analysis from mail ballot and

14   municipal elections, procurement, and the

15   management of a $5M annual budget. She's going to

16   share with us her views on vote-by-mail, and then,

17   of course, any questions you have.

18   Jessica.

19   MS. WHITE: Well, hello, and thank you

20   for the great introduction. I am Jessica White,

21   the voter services manager for Montgomery County,

22   and I'm going to dive into vote-by- mail, which

1   Matt did a good job of covering some of the

2   pieces, so that will kind of play nicely and we

3   can skip over some information.

4   I am going to start with just kind of

5   some common questions and then a little bit of a

6   state-level, like a really high-level overview,

7   and then kind of get down into the municipal side

8   based on my experience working in the state of

9   Kansas where mail-ballot elections were allowed to

10   be held for special elections.

11   So, we'll start off -- just a little bit

12   of overview, which Matt kind of covered.

13   (Technical interruption 00:28:16 --

14   possibly microphone problems)

15   MS. WHITE: So, just to kind of go a

16   little bit on what Matt was going through, there

17   are at least 22 states, including Maryland, that

18   currently have provision to allow elections to be

19   held by mail for, you know, different

20   circumstances. Four states, though, have enacted

21   laws or already undertake full-mail ballot

22   elections for any level of elections they hold,

1   which is Oregon, Washington, Colorado, and

2   soon-to-be California. For mail-out elections,

3   every registered voter is automatically mailed a

4   ballot out, and that's usually 21 to 30 days prior

5   to the election. And then they can return their

6   completed ballots. Of course, that's designated

7   drop centers or by the mail.

8   (Technical interruption)

9   MS. WHITE: So, this is a little, just

10   kind of background of the difference between

11   absentee balloting and actual vote-by-mail. So,

12   people often refer to vote-by-mail as absentee

13   ballots for everyone, but of course the biggest

14   difference with absentee balloting is that they

15   are request based. So, those are -- when you're

16   administering an election and you're setting up

17   polling places, you're training election judges,

18   you're also issuing absentee ballots. And you're

19   doing it based on the request from the voters, so

20   they're sending that in to you, you're processing

21   it, and you're doing it all the way leading up to

22   the actual election.

1   On the federal election side, there are

2   also requirements for military and overseas

3   voters, and they have to fill out a special type

4   of application submitted to the office. Those

5   ballots have to be mailed out 45 days before the

6   election and then also fill requests as we lead up

7   to the election.

8   So, when you go to a vote-by-mail

9   system, all of that kind of gets wound into one

10   process, and all of the ballots are mailed all at

11   once in a singular process.

12   Most states that undertake this process

13   have facilities to do it within their offices, but

14   many other states that do it only in special

15   elections or other circumstances use vendors or

16   other election experts that come in and actually

17   handle the process from, you know, the entirety.

18   So, some of the questions that often get

19   asked when jurisdictions are talking about and

20   considering the use of vote-by-mail are: Does it

21   increase turnout? How does it cost compare? How

22   difficult is it to administer elections by mail?

1   And what are some of the other issues that should

2   be considered? And being that these are all very

3   important questions, there really isn't a simple

4   answer across the board for, you know, all

5   jurisdictions.

6   With over 7,000 election jurisdictions

7   in this country -- depending on size, scale,

8   scope, federal elections, state elections, and

9   municipal elections -- there are many different

10   answers to that. And so there really -- you know,

11   it kind of depends, but being that most of the

12   people in this room are administering elections at

13   a municipal level, it really does kind of fall

14   into the site of being something that's a very

15   practical solution -- for instance, a lot of the

16   administration questions that I think are often

17   raised. So, I'm going to go over some examples of

18   turnout, again high at the state levels and then

19   back down to kind of illustrate that.

20   So, there were some recent studies done

21   by the Government Accountability Office that

22   looked at different studies of mail-ballot

1   elections, and so they reviewed a little over

2   20-some elections and what they found, from that

3   graphic up there, was that some studies found that

4   turnout was increased by doing mail-ballot

5   elections; some studies found mixed; some found no

6   evidence at all; and others actually said there

7   was a decreased turnout -- which was kind of

8   curious, especially the decreased turnout piece,

9   because while we think about the effects and, you

10 know, it has to do with elections, why would

11 actually the method of which you administer it by

12 mail decrease people's turnout?

13   So, some of the findings that they

14 found, particularly in the state of California,

15 were that there was the option for the

16 county-level elections to require voters who were

17 in a precinct with less than 250 people to vote by

18 mail only.

19   Well, if you think about how other

20 states have ruled out vote-by-mail -- you've heard

21 about it, right? -- you hear it on TV, you hear it

22 in the news and the press, and if you can imagine

1   what it's like living in those states, that

2   information is communicated widely -- while what

3   they found in California was when those smaller

4   jurisdictions or the small precincts -- nobody was

5   really talking about it.

6   So, the voters didn't really know what

7   was going on. They didn't know what they were

8   supposed to do. They didn't know why they weren't

9   going to their polling place. They didn't know

10   what was happening. So, what they found is when

11   they increased the amount of communication, it

12   brought that level of participation back up to the

13   same as the other voters who voted at the polling

14   places, and then over time they actually found the

15   more they communicated there were no, you know,

16   small precincts.

17   This is kind of just a timeline of the

18   implementation of the vote-by-mail systems across

19   the U.S. So, Oregon was the first state in 1998.

20   They did find that the first three elections that

21   they administered at the federal level did have a

22   huge increase, some up to 15 percent. But they

1 did find that after time that newness effect kind

2 of wore off. That shiny, brand new thing, and

3 people won't -- it was back to the same stable

4 amount as it had always been. But they did find

5 that there was still a lasting effect on these

6 sub-federal contests and special elections and the

7 municipal elections and lower-level government.

8 People were still participating more readily,

9 because it was convenient. It was coming to their

10 home. It was their vote the way they want to

11 vote; their way to participate.

12   Washington State has found similar kinds

13 of things. There have been some preliminary

14 studies that Washington State has actually had a

15 slight increase overall and that that has kind of

16 hung on. But we don't have the amount of data

17 still from Washington State that we do from Oregon

18 just because of the amount of time that they've

19 been doing these other elections by mail.

20   But it was important that these -- that

21 Matt pointed out about the Election Administrator

22 Survey that goes out, because that's how most of

1   these research studies are conducted. That

2   information that's gathered at the federal level

3   and put out there allows researchers a wealth of

4   information to be able to determine how people are

5   voting, what the method is, what systems and ways

6   people are undertaking.

7   And then of course in 2014 Colorado put

8   in place the hybrid system whether it was vote

9   centers, same-day registration, vote-by-mail.

10   They already had 74 percent voters who are

11   choosing to vote by the absentee method. That was

12   similar in Oregon and Washington State, and that

13   was the reason they went to those types of

14   systems. So, they were already experiencing a lot

15   of people who were very familiar with that method.

16   But there were studies done in other

17   states, namely California, that were polling

18   voters and asking them: What do you think about

19   voting by mail? And they found that voters who

20   had only exclusively ever voted at polling places

21   -- about

22   percent of them said they weren't

1   interested. It didn't seem like a method they

2   wanted to undertake, something that they were

3   interested in.

4   So, you know, through this research

5   process they got people to try vote-by-mail. And

6   when they went back to them and did the poll

7   again, they found 77 percent of them wanted to it

8   again. That was really their method; they liked

9   it. They found it to be more convenient. They

10   found they didn't have to wait in line. They

11   didn't have to go through these other hoops. So,

12   they really did feel that that was a method that

13   helped them.

14   No, I don't know what -- I'll just give

15   you the look.

16   SPEAKER: All right.

17   MS. WHITE: So, this is talking about

18   Colorado, Washington, and Oregon. These are

19   turnout tables from previous elections over the

20   years. As you can see, this compares the U.S.

21   turnout in these major elections and then the

22   individual states. And so in every case, the

1   states were already beating the federal turnout

2   level for the United States as a whole.

3   But what I thought was most surprising

4   about this is -- especially if you look at Oregon

5   -- the amount of increase in turnout in the

6   gubernatorial elections, which tend to be far less

7   turnout than presidential elections and the like.

8   It really seemed to be something that was

9   impactful.

10   And of course Colorado's on this list,

11   and it has yet to be seen because theirs is so new

12   to them, but they've also seen a 2 to 5 percent

13   increase in the election in 2014, so I'm sure

14   there will be a lot of good data coming out since

15   '16 to kind of bolster some of this.

16   Hey, look, it worked (phonetic). Okay,

17   so now we're going to get down to the

18   municipal level. And what I brought are

19   some actual slides of turnouts from special

20   elections done by mail ballot, and all of them

21   from about 2010 down. I was part of the fun of

22   those elections.

1   So, these are the mail ballot. Next are

2   the special elections, and then there was a

3   regularly scheduled general election for

4   municipalities every year. In Kansas municipal

5   elections were administered at the county level.

6   Maryland -- I don't know if all of you know this

7   -- is very unique in the fact that the codes of

8   Maryland have given pretty open season to

9   municipalities to determine their own method for

10   how they conduct elections. It's very unique in

11   the United States. I think it's fascinating, and

12   it's, you know, part of some of the innovation and

13   growth and processes and changes and things. So

14   many things originate here in Maryland because of

15   the uniqueness. But because it was administered

16   at the county level in the other states that I was

17   in, I have found this information to kind of

18   share, you know, the background of this.

19   So, looking at this chart, I'm going to

20   highlight a few things. So, I've put little red

21   arrows next to the lowest turnout of a mail-ballot

22   election, over about 10 years, and then also in

1   that same timeframe the lowest turnout for a

2   special election at a polling place. So, as you

3   can see, the lowest mail-ballot turnout was 29.96

4   percent. The lowest turnout of course for a

5   special election in person was 11.18 percent.

6   There is a lot of research that goes

7   into the special elections content to draw higher

8   turnout just in general just because people may

9   have special interest. It might be a contested

10 race. It might be a recall. It may be taxation

11 or something to that effect. But I think this

12 was, you know, kind of a good illustration. And

13 then if you look at the highest turnout of a

14 regularly scheduled municipal election, it was

15 less than the lowest turnout mail-ballot election.

16   And then this next graphic is kind of a

17 zoom-in. And what it shows is this is one

18 particular municipality. These elections were

19 conducted about two years apart, and you can see

20 that 11 percent and 23 percent, respective, and in

21 between that there was a mail-ballot election that

22 had almost a 35 percent turnout. These were all

1   special elections. They were all in the same

2   municipality. These were all the same voters.

3   (Inaudible) there were different things that tied

4   into (inaudible), I think the spring general

5   elections were for the replacement of --

6   See, that's the wrong heading (re

7   slides). That special elections were for the

8   replacement of a

9   seat for somebody that had vacated in

10 the city council. So, this just kind of gives an

11 illustration of what can be seen as a possibility

12 when you use mail ballot as a solution.

13   On caveat that I'll cover later, but in

14 Kansas by law any election that is conducted

15 entirely by mail, the postage for returning the

16 ballot has to be prepaid. So, the municipality

17 bores the cost for that. But it does -- there is

18 some indication, at least, that that is a factor

19 that does generate turnout. There was a study

20 done -- a pilot in Washington State -- and they

21 did find about a 10 percent increase in turnout

22 when they did in a couple of small special

1   elections for postage paid.

2   Again, it's hard to look at it and know

3   was it the election? Was it the candidates? Was

4   it -- what caused the turnout? But when you look

5   at, you know, these previous numbers of these huge

6   numbers of elections, you can see just across the

7   board special elections always drew larger crowds

8   than almost any other -- I mean, even the highest

9   turnout of a special election in the polling place

10   was lower than the lowest turnout for vote by

11   mail.

12   Then we get into cost. This is a

13   question that often comes up. So, there are a

14   couple of drivers that go into the cost of

15   conducting elections at the municipal level. One

16   of the highest costs often is election judges.

17   Recruitment and training can also be very labor

18   intensive, time intensive. Lots of man-hours and

19   staffing go into that, and I'm sure many of you

20   share my sentiment in knowing that you've now

21   trained the workforce. You've sent them off to

22   the polls to conduct the election, and whatever

1   happens is in their hands. And if so, that's, you

2   know, one of those things that come along with

3   that.

4   When it comes to printing and mailing,

5   there is a lot of increased cost over polling

6   place selections from that standpoint. But

7   elections are an economy of scale. So, it's --

8   the more you do, the more you produce, the more

9   you print, the more you -- the more of a cost

10   break you get. To illustrate this is a little

11   example of a vendor price sheet, and it's kind of

12   like comparable costs of elections for envelopes,

13   provision envelopes, outgoing envelopes, and so

14   forth. And kind of what you can see illustrated

15   is that the more you spend or the more you

16   purchase, the lower the price breaks are for --

17   so, you're always buying absentee ballots; you're

18   already mailing ballots; you're already, you know,

19   incurring these costs. And so by sending out all

20   of them out that way, although there is an overall

21   higher cost, it decreases because of the volume.

22   So, your per-piece cost is much, much lower.

1   Additionally, you don't end up with the

2   amount of waste that is generally associated with

3   these new systems that we've gone to.

4   Paper-based voting systems require you

5   to do an estimate of the amount of ballots you may

6   need for the election. When you're doing it with

7   one ballot style, you have a little bit better

8   control over how many ballots you need. But you

9   still run into the issue with multiple polling

10   places, early voting, having enough supply. They

11   come back, they have to be destroyed. You

12   typically are packing up and getting stuff ready

13   for Election Day; you can't reuse the ballots that

14   are left over from early voting; and those kinds

15   of things. Or you're in the situation where

16   somebody's calling frantic because they're down to

17   a certain amount of ballots that maybe in your

18   mind seems like more than enough but the

19   supervising judge is really concerned they're not

20   going to get through the day. And so now you're

21   running around trying to get together that amount

22   of ballots to kind of get out to those polling

1   places. So, those are some of the, you know, cost

2   drivers that go into the overall.

3   And then from an equipment standpoint

4   side, because most of the municipalities in the

5   state of Maryland contract with the state, they

6   contract with their county office, they work with

7   other agencies, they use kind of some of their own

8   things. Traditionally, when a county or a large

9   -- or a state would look into the cost of

10   conducting mail-ballot elections, they came from

11   the vast history of having direct recorded

12   equipment. So, you have voting machines that

13   directly -- there's no paper cost. You own a

14   piece of equipment. HAVA bought it years and

15   years ago. You take it out to the same polling

16   place, you bring it back, and there's no direct

17   cost to using that same piece of equipment other

18   than some delivery and training types of things.

19   But in today's world where we used the

20   paper-based systems and with municipalities that

21   don't own equipment, there isn't that same allure

22   to continue to use that equipment at no cost. So,

1   that becomes another driver that makes it more

2   cost efficient. Also, there's no need for poll

3   books or precinct scanners when you're working

4   with those kinds of systems.

5   What I brought was an actual example of

6   those special elections and some of the cost.

7   Now, this is a very, very small jurisdiction, but

8   I think it kind of helps illustrate that while

9   looking at the two comparisons -- polling place on

10   the right, vote-by-mail on the left -- you can see

11   that the vote-by-mail of course was far more

12   expensive. But when you look at the bottom, we

13   have our registered voters -- almost 5,000 on the

14   left and 1,200 on the right -- but the cost per

15   registered voter. So, if you conduct the

16   vote-by-mail, it's $2.36. On the other hand, you

17   know, there's a polling place selection. It's

18   $3.93. So, when you boil it down to what you're

19   actually paying per registered voter -- and then

20   when you look at the turnout of, you know, one

21   election at 20 percent, the other election at

22   percent, then you can also see the cost

1   per return ballot and then what the overall

2   drivers are for those.

3   And then the last kind of -- things get

4   into voter convenience things, like Matt talked

5   about. Drop boxes -- do you do the prepaid

6   postage? Signature verification comes in to

7   question with security. You know, we can't ignore

8   the things that have been raised and things we see

9   on the news -- questions about how do we protect

10   the vote and ensure verification. While it's not

11   a law at the county level, or state in Maryland

12   now, it's certainly something that can voluntarily

13   be done. It's done in many other states.

14   Totally optional, but also something

15   that kind of gives that piece of mind. Security

16   experts find that mail- ballot elections -- it's

17   very rare that there are fraudulent types of

18   activity. I can tell you, working in the

19   jurisdiction, that the largest mail-ballot

20   election I was part of we mailed out a little over

21   300,000 ballots, and a little over $100,000 was

22   returned. And the biggest, signature verification

1   issue that we encountered were husbands and wives

2   mixed up their ballots. And so one signed for the

3   other, and they were swapped.

4   And we could remedy that. We could

5   contact them, have them come in, have them fix

6   those -- you know, sign the right ones, and get

7   them flipped. Yes, there are incidents where a

8   son's away from college, and Mom fills out his

9   ballot and signs it and sends it in. Those things

10   do happen. But typically it's not somebody trying

11   to gather up a large amount of ballots and mail

12   them or take over.

13   And then the other piece that Matt was

14   also talking about was the in-person voting. That

15   is a solution for voters in states that do mail

16   ballot exclusively. Oregon and Washington do set

17   up, typically at their county courthouse federal

18   offices, in-person voting mainly for voters who

19   are disabled. So, it's a method for them to come

20   in and be able to be assisted or use assisted

21   technology.

22   Maryland, years ago, at the county level

1   launched online-ballot delivery, and there was a

2   -- there's an online- ballot wizard that voters

3   can use to complete their ballots at home, and

4   that technology allows the voters to use their

5   (inaudible) technologies or their

6   other adapted devices and their own

7   equipment to be able to complete a

8   ballot in an acceptable manner in

9   the privacy of their own home. And

10   it's been extremely popular by

11   voters in Maryland. They've really

12   taken to the technology. They

13   already know their own equipment,

14   their own things. We certainly, of

15   course, have accessible equipment

16   at the polling places, and it's

17   readily available. It's, you know,

18   fairly easy to manipulate. It's a

19   lot of input from the disabled

20   community in getting that equipment

21   put together. But we don't see as

22   many voters using it. They tend to

1   like to bring somebody, have

2   somebody assist them in the

3   process, do things that they're

4   familiar with. Maryland at this

5   time doesn't use adaptive

6   technologies on, like, smart

7   phones, but the system does have

8   that capability. So, those are

9   some of the things though that are

10   consideration points for voters,

11   you know, when looking at doing all

12   by mail.

13   And then some of the other

14 considerations -- I kind of covered some: Postal

15 reliability becomes the question. This is

16 something that has vastly improved. There have

17 been postal delivery issues. The Post Office has

18 changed some of their service delivery timeframes

19 that have impacted voters. But I can tell you

20 this last election and the collaboration with the

21 Postal Service to efficiently -- so, now, we send

22 out 68,000 absentee ballots. You know, the ones

1   that were returned to us were returned to us

2   because the address wasn't up to date or other

3   pieces of information, but it was relatively

4   small.

5   Our jurisdiction actually had an

6   incident where some valid templates that were

7   mapped for overseas voters were inadvertently

8   used, and they were example pieces, and so they

9   were coded anywhere in Maryland 0000 Montgomery

10   County Board of Elections.. And somehow the Post

11   Office figured out how to route those to us.

12   Unfortunately, they were being used by voters all

13   over the country, so we were getting ballots from

14   all over the country. So, the Post Office,

15   working with the FVAP, with the Department of

16   Defense for Overseas Voters, devised a really -- I

17   mean, we sat on a conference call and in an hour

18   they put together a system where they

19   special-label overnighted them back to the voter,

20   told them what happened, gave them the right forms

21   to correct it, and got those ballots turned around

22   and back to the right places in time for the

1   election.

2   It was amazing to me that they

3   (inaudible) in what they could do -- on a few

4   occasions called, had ballots tracked at the Post

5   Office in the equipment somewhere, pulled them

6   out, found them, rescued them. But ballot

7   tracking really becomes a great tool now that

8   we've gone to intelligent-mail barcode. It's a

9   free service. It's included with the

10   intelligent-mail barcode service, so it's

11   something that can readily be used. Great

12   technological advance that wasn't there prior that

13   now certainly is at play.

14   I talked a little bit about the security

15   (inaudible), and then of course

16   this California study and the

17   voters' resistance to change until

18   they actually did it.

19   And then the last piece is

20   disqualification due to voter error filling out

21   the envelope. In my old jurisdiction, this

22   actually was quite an issue. Voters were required

1   to write their address on the back of the absentee

2   envelope -- or an all-mail ballot envelope. But

3   it was already printed on there. And so of course

4   voters were, like, I don't need to do that. Well,

5   that was an automatic disqualification. And it

6   took legislative change and a lot of lessons to

7   say that, you know, probably just make it easy,

8   have them sign it. That should be the

9   requirement. Introduce it back in the mail

10   stream. Make sure it gets postmarked, and then

11   everybody completes -- gets their ballots back to

12   the office and counted and --

13   So, that's just some of the

14   consideration points, some of the information and

15   background on all-mail ballot elections.

16   CHAIR NEUMAN: We thank Jessica for

17   sharing her experiences, and before we go into

18   Open Session I want to encourage you to complete

19   and submit the evaluation form that you received

20   in your materials.

21   And now we're going to open it up to you

22   all. So, if you have comments, questions, you'll

1   have a microphone, find a microphone, shift it

2   over, and indicate your name, your position, and

3   to whom you address your comment or question. So,

4   I open it up to all of you. Go ahead.

5   MR. ROBSON: I was first, I'll be first

6   (laughter) - -

7   CHAIR NEUMAN: Go ahead. Go ahead.

8   MR. ROBSON: I have two questions, one

9   on the mail type thing. I heard some things which

10 I'm confused about -- and I don't hear too well,

11 so.

12   There was some emphasis on the fact that

13 out there I guess in the all-mail states they like

14 to ride their bicycles and throw them in the box.

15 Now, in most states, do they prepay the return

16 ballots, or are they saving half a buck by riding

17 their bike to drop it off? That's -- because I'm

18 just curious about the number of people who

19 actually would come in. Would it go up or down if

20 they were prepaid? And that was -- it also

21 applies to Jessica's question.

22   MR. MASTERSON: Yup.

1   MR. ROBSON: In the Overland example --

2   I saw those around 3K for postage, but was that

3   return postage?

4   And the other question is how do they

5   mail them out? Is it first class? Is it ninth

6   class? Is it -- you know, how do you know what's

7   going on?

8   MS. WHITE: Okay, so -- I'll take that.

9   In the other states, widely postage paid return is

10   not used. But they did do a pilot in

11   Washington State last year, and they are planning

12   to continue to pilot it and see if it has a

13   mechanism. But, as Matt said in his presentation,

14   voters like to bring their ballots in. Washington

15   State, Oregon -- they set up drops all over the

16   place for voters. They have -- like the library

17   book returns, they have boxes set up. They have

18   them in Supermarkets. They have them at

19   libraries. I mean, they have them all over. If a

20   voter is somewhere and they want to make sure that

21   ballot gets in -- because one of the things that

22   -- another kind of issue that comes up -- they

1   said when you mail somebody a ballot they think

2   they have all the time in the world, and they kind

3   of hold onto it.

4   MR. ROBSON: So, is the previous a

5   prepaid what they call dekia ie (phonetic)? You

6   don't pay it till you get there?

7   MS. WHITE: Right.

8   MR. ROBSON: Okay.

9   MS. WHITE: So, there are two methods.

10 You could either apply a stamp or you could use a

11 business reply account. My jurisdiction used

12 business reply, and so you did just pay upon what

13 actually was received back.

14   MR. MASTERSON: Just quickly, I think

15 addressing your second question -- I'm trying to

16 remember what it was. I get confused easily, yes.

17   MR. ROBSON: Well, is the -- I asked

18 about the turnout and the prepaid at the Rosedale

19 example, and was there a higher turnout if there

20 was no prepaid is really what the question was.

21   MR. MASTERSON: Yeah.

22   MS. WHITE: So -- yes, they find that,

1   you know, in the states Oregon and Washington,

2   they already had very high turnout at that time.

3   Turnout continued, but they did find about a 10

4   percent increase in turnout in the special

5   elections that they did the pilots for. There

6   were two special elections for municipalities

7   (inaudible) Washington.

8   MR. ROBSON: It's more of a

9   semi-political question as opposed to an

10   administrative question. It cost $11,000 in the

11   Rosedale example to get back -- the cost per voter

12   was less, but the cost of the election was more

13   than twice as much, so -- if I remember the

14   numbers. It's a little hard for me to see the

15   screen as well.

16   So, College Park is kind of unique,

17   because we have 18,000 voters. Around 5,000 are

18   students who disappear every four years or every

19   two years of our election cycle. So, if we're

20   mailing these things out -- and we calculated it

21   once -- it's about a buck and a half for postage

22   to send them out with the suitable envelopes.

1   You've got this envelope, that envelope, and the

2   other -- all stuffed in one -- and they're

3   oversized. Right now that's -- so, we'll be

4   spending $20,000 of which $6,000 will be going to

5   the students. And we want the students to vote --

6   don't misunderstand -- but a lot of them do not.

7   So --

8   MS. WHITE: Having a good relationship

9   with your mail house is --

10   MR. ROBSON: I'm sorry?

11   MS. WHITE: Having a good relationship

12   with your mail house, your mail vendor, is a good

13   solution. You can actually get your ballot cost

14   down to about 35 cents a ballot for first-class

15   mail. So, first-class mail is important. That

16   comes with standard services.

17   MR. ROBSON: That's a presorted kind of

18   stuff?

19   MS. WHITE: No, first class is regular

20   full service, like, you put a stamp on the front

21   of it. But even though it's a 44 cent

22   transaction, if you work with a mail house, they

1   can do different processes: CASS certification,

2   address correction. They make sure that it's

3   suitable to be mailed. They put them in carrier

4   sort order. All these things end up with a

5   discount in the postal rate for you.

6   So -- and being from a jurisdiction,

7   like I said, in Kansas and in Maryland, but the

8   last election in Kansas we mailed out 77,000

9   ballots before the presidential election in '12 by

10   absentee, and we got our costs way down. I mean,

11   you can really --

12   MR. ROBSON: What was the size of the

13   ballot envelope that went out?

14   MS. WHITE: For that election, we -- and

15   I can --

16   MR. ROBSON: A No. 10 standard size?

17   MS. WHITE: You can (inaudible) No. 10.

18   MR. ROBSON: So, you must have really

19   rolled them over, I mean, because in our process,

20   it has to come -- well, you mentioned it. The

21   special envelope wasn't signed so you disqualified

22   him, because it has to come back in a sealed

1   envelope.

2   MS. WHITE: Right.

3   MR. ROBSON: So, there are two envelopes

4   that have to be mailed.

5   MS. WHITE: Right.

6   MR. ROBSON: Plus the ballot.

7   MS. WHITE: A 9 and a 10.

8   MR. ROBSON: It weighs a lot more when

9   we -- we would think about going -- we have -- we

10   do not have no-excuse absentees. So, we were --

11   this counsel was considering going to no-excuse

12   absentee, and we were asked to evaluate the cost,

13   and it ended up, like, $28 a ballot with a staff

14   required to process the --

15   MS. WHITE: Oh, wow.

16   MR. ROBSON: -- to process the absentee

17   ballots to make sure they're good voters; to put

18   them in the envelopes; to mail them back; bring

19   them back, go through the special control process

20   to make sure we're not getting back ballots we

21   didn't send out. It was a lot of time and a lot

22   of postage. And that's we worked out it would

1   cost in our fair city. And so it may sound like a

2   lot, but that's what we did, and that's why I'm

3   asking these questions so I thought.

4   MS. WHITE: And I think some of that is

5   the difficulty, and that was always kind of this

6   yin and yang -- the poll we had. If you do

7   polling place elections and you mail ballots --

8   you do both -- it's difficult to do both at the

9   same time. There's -- it's competing. You're

10   trying to look the voters up. You're trying to

11   get the ballots back in. You're trying to get the

12   ballots back in. You're trying to prepare them to

13   go out. You're trying to manage all these forces.

14   At the same time, you're trying to get polling

15   places, election judges, and those kinds of

16   things. And I said it -- from having the

17   equipment in-house to do it, it's like you need

18   the Bat Cave. You need to hit the button and the

19   floor flips over and now you have a whole

20   different voting system, because it's not even

21   alike systems and, you know, I could bore you for

22   days with pictures. I even have a little clip of

1   the jet engine scanning device and how

2   (inaudible).

3   I can also show you a detailed cost

4   analysis of how -- but, again, this is

5   streamlining the process. It is going through and

6   doing a case study and, you know, because that's

7   how we ended up doing it -- is going down to other

8   jurisdictions, vote-by-mail states, and saying how

9   did you guys do this in an efficient manner?

10 Because, even though we administered the elections

11 at the county level for the municipalities and

12 they had to bore the cost, we couldn't just stick

13 them with -- you know, it wasn't a blank check.

14 They weren't just saying do whatever you want and

15 we'll pay the bill. So, we definitely got it down

16 to a reasonable amount, and when we looked at cost

17 comparison, we couldn't do a polling place

18 election for those 5,000 people for that $11,000.

19 That wasn't a feasible amount. I mean, just the

20 recruiting, judging.

21   MR. ROBSON: Thank you.

22   MS. WHITE: And I should include, too,

1   those were direct costs, so that did not include

2   our office staff labor hours in those estimates,

3   because we weren't allowed to bill those by law.

4   MR. MASTERSON: I'm just going to give a

5   cheap plug, and that is DAC created page

6   votebymail.gov) that has all the basics of

7   vote-by-mail: Some best practices, some

8   techniques that Jessica mentioned on working with

9   the Post Office. It includes personal service

10 resources. This last election the Postal Service

11 really committed to what -- They started talking

12 about that way and they viewed themselves as

13 election officials in many places, and they did a

14 heck of a job. And so there are a lot of

15 resources on delivery times, cost savings, using

16 first-class mail is super important, stuff like

17 that. They have a lot of election mail

18 information that's linked to this, so.

19   MS. REAMS: Laura Reams, City of

20 Hyattsville. Thank you both for the presentation.

21 Very informative.

22   Another question on vote-by-mail. I was

1   wondering if one of you guys could speak to the

2   signature verification process and just explain a

3   little bit more about how that works.

4   MR. MASTERSON: Sure.   So, I'll give

5   kind of general -- some general, and

6   then I'm sure you could speak to exactly

7   how you did it.   But it's going to depend a lot

8   on, obviously, state

9   law.   I know here in Maryland this is a

10   topic of discussion but it's not required now --

11   right? -- in looking at it.

12   It's done a variety of ways.   In Oregon,

13   they actually bring in FBI handwriting folks to do

14   training with their election officials to do this.

15   In Colorado, in Washington they pursued similar

16   things, but keep in mind, particularly in Oregon

17   and Washington, this is how they vote.   And so

18   committing those resources is part of their

19   security measures, literally.

20   In other states that have vote-by-mail

21   -- in Ohio, for instance, we offer general

22   guidance and techniques, but what's super

1   important, I think, in looking at the signature

2   verification, is that the point is you're trying

3   to verify the person, but you're also not a

4   signature expert. And so having clear guidance to

5   you all, your workers, about how to adjudicate, so

6   not just saying (inaudible) that's clearly not --

7   that "r" looks different, we're done with this.

8   Having really clear instructions just like you

9   would on determining voter intent or something

10   like that plays into the signature recognition,

11   too, because you don't want people just winging it

12   saying -- you know, playing Perry Mason with it.

13   And so like in Colorado they have a

14   series of adjudication steps, so one person or a

15   bipartisan team can't just throw it out. It moves

16   on to another step where someone else will look at

17   and then eventually it's adjudicated. So,

18   building in those layers as you do it ensures both

19   the voters and franchise -- if they should be --

20   but also a good review on the signatures if they

21   don't match, because then, you know, you have

22   possible fraud in play or whatever, so you really

1   want to get it right as best you can.

2   MS. WHITE: And just to piggyback on

3   everything you said, in Kansas we did have

4   signature verification. We did use bipartisan

5   teams. We did have them undergo training. We did

6   bring in experts from the FBI and other places to

7   do that. But another step that we took kind above

8   that was to send out signature cards. So, from

9   (inaudible) to signature didn't match or sometimes

10 you have a signature from somebody that they've

11 been registered for more years, or sometimes

12 somebody develops some type of manual dexterity

13 issue and you could just have a second chance to

14 say hey, could you update this and get it back to

15 us and let us know what the issue is?

16   Any ballot that was rejected for the

17 reason of signature went to the Board of

18 Canvassers for examination, and they would pull

19 the original signature card if we had it on file

20 or a replica from the electronic system, and this

21 became kind of an issue with motor voter laws that

22 went into place to allow people to register at the

1   MVAs, because getting that information transmitted

2   -- in Maryland it all comes over electronically,

3   and we don't verify signatures in Maryland, but we

4   certainly use signatures in Maryland especially

5   when somebody calls and said: That wasn't me.

6   And we can pull it up and say: Was this you? Oh,

7   that was me. Okay, great. You know, we let them

8   verify some of those things. So, it is, you know,

9   kind of the basics of how that --

10   MR. MASTERSON: Jessica made me think of

11   one other thing, and that is in many of the states

12   the vote-by-mail -- when reviewing signatures they

13   don't just have the most recent signature

14   available but a series of signatures over time so

15   you can see a trend if there are developments of

16   dexterity issues and whatnot, so that you're not

17   just looking at one but a series of them, and they

18   do a good job kind of working through that. So,

19   giving yourself as much information as possible

20   when doing signature verification. But in the

21   end, even with really good training, you all

22   aren't going to be handwriting analysts, right?

1   You're not going to be those experts. We'll add

2   that to the list of things you do, though, right?

3   MS. REAMS: Thank you both.

4   MS. WHITE: And I will also add, too,

5   it's kind of - - when -- you know, inevitably

6   mistakes happen. Sometimes voter records get

7   munched. Voters have common names. And it's

8   usually very distinct to tell what happened,

9   because you're flipping and looking at those back

10   images, and you can see the one that doesn't look

11   like the others, and then it becomes oh, this must

12   be the piece that was, you know, accidentally --

13   and that helps us to work in that way, too. So,

14   even though we don't use signature verification,

15   we do use it as a tool in doing our jobs.

16   MR. WEINER: Stephen Weiner with the

17   City of Rockville. Would you speak a little bit

18   about security, physical security. If I'm

19   dropping off my ballot at the Safeway checkout

20   counter or the library, what's the chain of

21   custody? How frequently are they picked up? Do

22   we have to have security in each of these

1   facilities?

2   MR. MASTERSON: Sure.   It's a great

3   question.   As with everything in elections, when

4   you're talking on a larger scale, the answer is it

5   depends how it's done.   So, it's going to depend

6   state to state, county to county in some cases.

7   Typical practices that we see are some

8   sort of camera or security around; set drop boxes,

9   although I'll say in many of the vote-by-mail

10   states, they'll put them in well- lit areas and

11   stores that already have cameras, so in the

12   grocery store typically you're going to have

13   perimeter cameras anyway, so they'll work to set

14   them up in places that already have surveillance

15   of some sort, obviously having good locks, keys,

16   things like that.   And then they pick up

17   regularly.   So, many of the locations will pick up

18   multiple times during the day, and they make sure

19   that they're cleared, you know, at the end of the

20   day for that.

21   The other kind of physical security

22   challenge that I know many of them -- is putting

1   them in places that someone can't just drive

2   through them, right? Just run them over? And so

3   selecting locations that kind of guard against

4   those sorts of what would be a tax of sorts --

5   right? -- if someone chose to. And so, yeah, all

6   of that physical security, chain of custody,

7   maintenance of those systems -- absolutely.

8   Just like you would with any other

9   ballots having that in place, having a good plan

10   for that is critically important, and it's kind of

11   -- Jessica mentioned it -- it's kind of cool now

12   with the intelligent mail barcode that the Post

13   Office offers. You can chain of custody the

14   ballot through the Postal Service now. So,

15   providing voters -- you know, we've created your

16   ballot, we've mailed you your ballot, your ballot

17   is here in the mail process. Now we see the

18   ballot is back being returned to us. We've got it

19   at the processing center. We've, you know,

20   scanned your ballot and your ballot's been

21   counted. Literally, jurisdictions that do

22   vote-by-mail will offer that kind of Zappos-like

1   experience -- right? -- where voters can sit there

2   and go: Holy smokes, I can see exactly where my

3   ballot is. And so it's pretty neat the level of

4   detail and information that can be provided, and I

5   know the election officials that administer

6   vote-by-mail ballots -- one of the things they

7   love because either secretly or not secretly, all

8   of you are intense control freaks, because every

9   election official is -- the amount of control they

10   feel they have over the process in vote-by-mail

11   they love. They aren't relying on poll workers or

12   anyone else. They can control it working with the

13   Postal Service.

14   MR. JOHNSON: Graham Johnson, City of

15   Rockville, Board of Elections.

16   Talk about being control freaks, I was

17   -- my question I had in mind deals with the use of

18   commercial off- the-shelf software, COT software.

19   Concerns I've had, not elections, but with

20   financial systems, are what do people do - - what

21   could people be planting in that off-the-shelf

22   software and how to guard against those concerns.

1   While you do your own, you can -- you like to

2   think you can better control that environment

3   there. So, what are the security measures taken

4   with respect to ensuring commercial off-the-shelf

5   software is doing exactly what you think it should

6   be doing?

7   MR. MASTERSON: Yeah, that's actually a

8   super common concern that I've heard from election

9   officials, particularly with regard (inaudible),

10   so most of the time when we're talking about COTS,

11   you're talking about hardware. The software

12   you're going to probably get from some election

13   vendor of some sort, right? But you still have

14   firmware on their, right? And it's still running

15   an operating system and otherwise, and so that's a

16   common concern that I've heard.

17   And two ways that folks try to deal with

18   that. One is understanding and trying to purchase

19   COTS systems that are widely used, so part of the

20   advantage of COTS is that you can buy something

21   that millions and millions of people use. And so

22   there's a level of assurance there. And then also

1   buying - - and I know at least one jurisdiction

2   buying military-grade COTS. So, it's COTS but

3   they're buying an extra level of it, and so there

4   are certain assurances that they find with that -

5   - and then, you know, testing the heck out of it,

6   evaluating it. But the reality is if you're

7   buying an Apple iPad, you're not going to have the

8   ability to do any kind of full source code review

9   or whatnot, but it's also a widely used

10   (inaudible). So, you assume some

11   risk with that there, and the

12   assumption is that the marketplace

13   has sorted through that in the form

14   of the COTS that's being provided.

15   But it is a risk that you take with

16   it. No question.

17   I'll say also I think some of the folks

18   in the security community would say that there's

19   no assurance that proprietary purchased software

20   and hardware don't have some of that same concern

21   -- right? -- and something loaded on there as

22   well, and that's why you do reviews and scans and

1   code review and whatnot.

2   MS. WHITE: And I would just add to his

3   comment by saying you can never underestimate an

4   election judge on a slow day.

5   MR. ROBSON: If somebody hasn't asked

6   I'll sit back.

7   CHAIR NEUMAN: Okay.

8   MS. RAU: Hi, I'm Kim Rau from the City

9   of Laurel. We have about 13,000 registered

10   voters, and we only

11   get about 2,000 votes in an election.

12   The vote-by-mail -- I have a question with the

13   barcode you were talking about through the Post

14   Office. Would that be something that would be

15   available to us as a small -- and would you

16   recommend that for maybe only 50 absentee ballots?

17   Is that something --

18   MS. WHITE: Yes, it's absolutely

19   available. In fact, it's recommended -- and

20   required in some instances -- by the Post Office.

21   So, yes, it would be a great tool.

22   There's also a program through Democracy

1 Works. It's called Ballot Track, and they work

2 with election officials to set up and track

3 ballots. And just like Matt was saying, it's an

4 end-to-end product where it tracks a ballot all

5 the way through the process and all the way back.

6 And, actually, even if you have a small amount of

7 ballots that's great scalable project, because you

8 have to apply unique barcodes to outbound and also

9 the return envelope, which any mass printer

10 readily can do. But even if you're doing it in-

11 house you can have software downloaded that

12 generates that barcode.

13   But I really do recommend Ballot Track

14 as a great process. They work -- it's low cost.

15 It's something developed for election officials.

16 That's really what their drive and purpose is.

17 So, they're not for profit, but it is a way that

18 -- they already have readily available software

19 for that. But it is something you can do through

20 a mailer, too.

21   MS. RAU: Thank you.

22   MR. SNYDER: I'm Paul Snyder, City of

1   Gaithersburg. Mr. Masterson, did you -- does the

2   EAC have

3   guidelines? Because you were talking

4   about audibility of running elections without

5   paper records and being able to -- because I come

6   from a background where I work for a federal

7   agency that investigated union elections, and

8   whenever we were asked questions about, you know,

9   could they give us guidelines regarding running an

10   election without paper, essentially we could not

11   give them guidelines for providing a nonpaper

12   election. And there are some unions where the

13   nature of the union is that they're very mobile,

14   like airline pilots, and so they would want to

15   run, like, a phone election or, you know, just be

16   able to check it off on their computer. And yet

17   we required that we be able to go behind, get the

18   source codes, get the information and couldn't

19   ensure the -- we couldn't sufficiently investigate

20   the election without having a paper record. So,

21   has the EAC provided guidelines regarding running

22   elections without paper?

1   MR. MASTERSON: Yeah, that's an awesome

2   question and one I should have plugged and you

3   just reminded me.

4   We do. Our guidelines development for

5   the voting system specifically is done with our

6   partners at NIST out there in Gaithersburg. So,

7   we work directly with NIST and the NIST scientists

8   on doing it.

9   So, I think, one, the scientific

10   community, including -- I think folks in NIST

11   would tell you there's no true way to audit a

12   system without some sort of -- whether it be paper

13   or -- now there's a development of what's called

14   end- to-end or E2E systems, but those aren't

15   widely available yet. They're mostly academic

16   research at this point. And so if the goal is to

17   allow and to go back and count that physical

18   record to do it, I think scientists would tell you

19   that the only true way to do that was to look at

20   the paper record.

21   With that said, there are techniques,

22   and we have some information up as far as

1   reviewing, doing pre-election

2   (inaudible) but then post-election

3   reviews of the votes against, you

4   know, the digital record. So,

5   there's multiple redundancies

6   within the system that you could

7   check against. But in the end I

8   think what most have said is if

9   you're relying on some sort of

10   software to review it, you know, is

11   that giving you the level of

12   audibility.

13   So, the short answer is that we do have

14   some guidelines that I can share with you

15   afterwards around that, but I think if you're

16   talking about auditing an election, generally the

17   scientific community would tell you, though, the

18   only way to do that is to review that ballot of

19   record.

20   MR. SNYDER: Thank you.

21   MR. ROBSON: Nobody else? I want to

22   plug for your agency. You had indicated you

1   didn't do e-ballot reviews. University of

2   Maryland -- they have incubators for this and

3   incubators for that, and they like to start new

4   companies. Suppose some professors and students

5   decided to write software to do exactly what we

6   want: To take off-the-shelf machines and make it.

7   Couldn't you guys get your charter, or whatever

8   it's called, that established you changed to allow

9   you to be an approving source for off-the-shelf

10   scanners or whatever -- off-the-shelf scanners? I

11   mean, because it sounds like it's coming and you

12   would be the people to do it.

13   MR. MASTERSON: Sure. So, we can test

14   and certify that now. And as a matter of fact --

15   MR. ROBSON: question you didn't do

16   anything but systems.

17   MR. MASTERSON: We do voting -- well,

18   it's a good one. So, we do voting systems. So,

19   what would need to happen is that a manufacturer

20   or creator -- I mean, we have a process in which

21   you register and then submit the voting system to

22   us to review. What we don't do yet, because of

1   the lack of common data format, is certify

2   individual components. So, we wouldn't certify

3   just a scanner by itself. It has to be a scanner

4   with tabulation, ballot creation, stuff like that.

5   But there -- if it's a voting system, we will test

6   and certify it. We don't care what the hardware

7   is, for instance, or whatnot.

8   MR. ROBSON: Right, so I could bring you

9   a program run on a HP scanner, a Toshiba scanner,

10   and a whatever -- it would run on them all because

11   we design well -- and you would certify that it

12   runs good. (Laughter)

13   MR. MASTERSON: As long as it met all of

14   the requirements in our guidelines.

15   MR. ROBSON: Oh, yeah, understood, but

16   you do do that that.

17   MR. MASTERSON: Sure. We'll -- as it's

18   a voting system in that way. And to be clear,

19   COTS is not a new concept in voting in that even

20   the proprietary hardware systems use commercial

21   off-the-shelf monitors, things like that, within

22   their system. But it's surrounded or cased with

1 proprietary hardware, so that high-speed scanner

2 you saw -- the camera in that scanner can be

3 purchased from a company, right? They don't

4 create it themselves, but it's within a

5 proprietary system.

6   So, yeah, we -- I mean -- so, for

7 instance, the Denver system that we saw there that

8 has COTS products -- I would anticipate us testing

9 and certifying that voting system as it's

10 submitted to us in that way.

11   MR. ROBSON: Just a comment on your

12 question about - - I used to work for a company

13 where we did work for those people that float

14 around this area, and when we did the work for

15 them we would buy a new operating system, load it

16 in the machine, and then remove it after whatever

17 task we were doing was done and destroy the

18 operating system so that nothing could get written

19 to it, nothing would be changed, and it's a

20 hundred bucks. So, from an electric point of view

21 -- and you can get a license so you can put it on

22 five machines for $300. So, the cost is minimal

1   for an election. Not for us, that's a lot of

2   money, but for an election it's nothing. And you

3   can be pretty sure if you buy it from Microsoft

4   you can buy it from Apple. There's no problem

5   when you first get it, and you're throwing it away

6   after the election -- or taking it home.

7   (Laughter)

8   MS. REAMS: Earlier you guys talked

9   about the voter experience a lot, which I think is

10   very important. I'm wondering if on your travels

11   (inaudible) elections, you know, throughout the

12   country you showed that drive-through drop-off-

13   like thing, which is great. I'm wondering if

14   you've seen any other ideas that maybe could be

15   implemented at the level that are innovative like

16   that that you could share.

17   MR. MASTERSON: Oh, man, oh.

18   MS. REAMS: (Inaudible)

19   MR. MASTERSON: Do I?

20   MS. REAMS: (Inaudible)

21   MR. MASTERSON: Yeah.

22   MS REAMS: (Inaudible)

1   MR. MASTERSON: All right, that's a good

2   point. All right, another point, too.

3   The answer's yes, and you've challenged

4   me now to think off the top of my head, but

5   everywhere I go I see some best practices, simple

6   things to more complex things, that are -- the

7   sole purpose is to find ways to better serve

8   voters. And so coming out of 2012 on the line

9   management issues -- the long lines we saw a lot

10 of looking at ways to move voters through lines

11 more efficiently.

12   So, we have a lot of information,

13 actually -- tools and information -- up on our

14 website on moving voters through lines quickly and

15 also -- and so this is kind of a neat roundabout

16 way of answering your question.

17   The Presidential Commission on Election

18 Administration that looked at long lines at the

19 polls -- one of the commissioners was from Disney,

20 and one of the things -- right, because there's

21 lines at Disney -- but one of the things he talked

22 about that I know several election officials have

1   embraced and kind of thought about is if you have

2   lines, how do you make it so it doesn't feel like

3   you're waiting in line?

4   And so Disney is real good at that,

5   right? Disney makes you feel like, one, you're

6   not waiting in line, you're in a show or whatever,

7   but they also -- and I never noticed this till he

8   brought it up -- you also don't see everyone else

9   waiting in line except for the people immediately

10   in front of you. So, they wrap you around things

11   -- right? -- so you're not staring at a long line

12   and feeling like: I'm going to be in this

13   forever.

14   And so I've seen election officials --

15   and this will sound silly, but they've had really

16   good success putting up selfie stations along the

17   lines so that folks can sit there and snap

18   themselves with, you know, Thomas Jefferson or,

19   you know, whatever -- whatever they can think of

20   -- local celebrities or whatnot, or they've

21   created check-in points -- social media check-in

22   points -- so you can, you know, hey, I'm waiting

1   in line to vote -- and snap a picture on Instagram

2   or whatnot and put it up. And so that's all part

3   of the voter experience, now, is trying to embrace

4   and manage that. And it's simple. That's going

5   to cost them next to nothing to do it.

6   Then there's technological advances, so

7   -- I mean, we talked about e-poll books, but the

8   ability for those e-poll books to scan a driver's

9   license to check folks in from an efficiency

10   standpoint -- and so now folks have looked at ways

11   to advance the process so that essentially you can

12   move from the station where you check in, get your

13   ballot, and vote sort of all in one step so that

14   you're not going station to station but you kind

15   of just get issued it. And so there was even

16   conversation because of the use of the

17   availability of mobile phone in marking your

18   ballot. Can you create almost an E-Z Pass line

19   where they can check in, get scanned, go ahead and

20   zap it, look at their paper record, and drop it

21   through.

22   So -- man, I -- you have -- I'm going to

1   come back to you. I'm going to, like, I'm going

2   to, like, scribble down some. Everywhere I go I

3   see different ways that election officials have

4   embraced this challenged of finding new ways. I

5   mean, it sounds silly but in many polling

6   locations there were no chairs, and just the

7   availability of seating for folks who struggled to

8   stand or -- it sounds so simple. Or there's

9   Seminole County, Florida. The election official

10 down there is incredible, and he looked at parking

11 -- the amount of parking and the amount of left

12 turns versus right turns you have to take to get

13 into the various vote centers he set up because

14 the ease at which someone can come in, park, and

15 get out with using turns and whatnot impacted the

16 voter experience for them, and so one of the

17 things I'd encourage you all to do that is

18 becoming -- and we have these up on our website --

19 is it's becoming increasingly common for election

20 officials to do customer service surveys of the

21 voters: How was your experience? What did you

22 like? What didn't you like? What could we do

1   better? What would you like to see? And some of

2   this stuff is stuff you may not be able to do, but

3   some of the stuff should be: Oh, I never even

4   thought that is a service that we could provide.

5   The other thing is it has become an

6   expectation that you're answering five questions

7   for voters on your website and easily found, and

8   that is: Where do I vote? What am I voting on?

9   What's on my ballot, right? How do I vote? So,

10 what's my experience going to be when I come in?

11 What are the machines, whatnot? And am I

12 registered? So, I guess four -- so, if you don't

13 have those -- those questions need to be answered

14 directly within your website or if you have a

15 mobile app or whatever. Those are the questions

16 voters ask: Am I registered? What's on my

17 ballot? Where am I going to vote? And how am I

18 going to be asked to do it?

19   MR. ALBRIGHT: Bill Albright from

20 Gaithersburg. Are the presentations available

21 that could be sent out?

22   MR. MASTERSON: Absolutely, yeah,

1   absolutely. I should ask you, are your reviews

2   available also so

3   that I can reevaluate my presentation.

4   (Laughter) That would be awesome. I'd love that.

5   I like candid feedback.

6   SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

7   MR. MASTERSON: Yeah, I'm for it. My

8   day -- it can't be -- when I used to go talk in

9   Ohio -- well, with my counties -- they didn't hold

10   back. So, election officials are nothing if not

11   candid. So, it makes us all better.

12   MS. EVANS: Good question. Patricia

13   Evans, Greenbelt.

14   Jessica, when you showed the comparison,

15   I was wondering -- the mail -- did you use that

16   big scanner that we had seen a picture of, or how

17   did you guys count?

18   MS. WHITE: So, that picture came out at

19   election at the time we were using the

20   little-bitty OS scanners that used to be part of

21   the Montgomery County system. In fact, we

22   processed an election without 60,000 return

1 ballots that way. The only time we actually used

2 the high-speed scanner in my old jurisdiction for

3 a mail-ballot election was when we mailed out a

4 hundred thousand ballots. So, you can actually

5 accomplish a lot the small precinct bubble

6 scanners. Of course now in Montgomery we do have

7 the 850 -- the SA850s -- and with the two-page

8 ballot that's very long, it's a lifesaver. But,

9 yeah, you could certainly do it with -- especially

10 with this low volume. You don't need a high-speed

11 scanner.

12   MS. EVANS: And from that, I guess we're

13 not seeing this possible -- yeah, because as we

14 talk about security for our future (inaudible).

15   MR. MASTERSON: It's an interesting

16 point. I think we might -- it depends on the cost

17 of what? I think if we can get to the point where

18 components are available and whatnot, the ability

19 to sustain -- the cost of a voting system in

20 particular but really any election system -- and

21 this is a big lesson learned from HAVA -- isn't

22 just in the system itself. And I think --

1   sometimes we tend to think of them as a commodity

2   that I purchase, like the bottle of water, but

3   when you pay for a piece of election technology,

4   you're also paying for training and for

5   maintenance and for sustainability -- right -- for

6   upgrades and the consumables, so memory sticks and

7   printing ballots. That's a consumable.

8   And so as you evaluate the cost of

9   election technology, keep all of those things in

10   mind, right? And I actually think with the

11   efficiencies, election officials are beginning to

12   find in the process in a variety of election

13   technologies. I actually think that there will be

14   cost savings as you look at the life cycle, the

15   entire life cycle of the voting equipment, even if

16   the purchase price has remained the same or

17   increased with inflation or whatnot.

18   Also I was thinking about the question

19   about auditing as well, and one of the interesting

20   -- and this doesn't go to your exact question

21   about reviewing the result, but I know Maryland

22   did an audit where they reviewed every ballot

1   image in the entire state. They had a vendor look

2   at it. And so one of the questions when you talk

3   about auditing -- we talk about personal election

4   audits, looking at the result and confirming that,

5   but there's real value in audits like that.

6   Are there any accountants in the room?

7   (Laughter) One? Okay. All election officials are

8   accountants, too. That's also one of your jobs.

9   You guys do accounting techniques and practices in

10 everything you do.

11   The value in looking at those ballot

12 images in Maryland -- the folks in the state have

13 talked about this -- it really spoke to ways to

14 improve ballot layout and design, so you talk

15 about -- there's another one -- one of the big

16 areas of improvement since HAVA is laying out

17 election materials and ballots. So, we have a lot

18 of information on our website about designing

19 ballots, designing election materials in a usable

20 way for voters.

21   And I'll give you an example from Ohio.

22 We had a provisional ballot envelope that had been

1   the same for several years, and we were looking at

2   our provisional ballot rejection rates and

3   evaluating the usability of the envelope. And we

4   made a couple of really simple layout changes to

5   the provisional envelope and saw a tangible

6   increase in the number of provisional ballots

7   counted because the voter understood and only

8   filled -- you know, had to fill out exactly what

9   they needed -- and so usability of election

10   materials, including the ballots.

11   And when Maryland looked at those scans

12   they saw the mistakes voters were making, right?

13   You could actually physically look at how they're

14   marking the ballot and even see -- even when they

15   weren't marking something -- where they would

16   raster, stop -- right? -- because they're

17   rastering. And so you could see that voter

18   experience in those scans.

19   So, I know the State of Maryland made

20   changes to -- or looked at changes to ballots by

21   (inaudible) poor worker training and better

22   education to try to create a better experience for

1   the voter, just by looking at the scans. And

2   that's an audit. I mean, the process isn't just

3   that end result. Auditing your voter registration

4   systems, looking at ballot images and layout --

5   that's all part of a full audit of a process. It

6   can't just be about that last step, and there's a

7   variety of ways to do that. So, I jumped around

8   there as I was thinking, but that's -- usability

9   of this stuff has really improved, and there's a

10 lot of information out there now about laying out

11 ballot materials and doing that.

12   So, I think I kind of answered your

13 question I hope?

14   MR. VILLAO: Carlos Villao, City of

15 Gaithersburg. I have a question in regards to

16 voting focus on

17   voter's terms. That was one of your

18 topics in your presentations.

19   MR. MASTERSON: Mm-hmm.

20   MR. VILLAO: You could also call it

21 redefining early voting. Like, if a voter wanted

22 to wait -- not wait till November and want to

1 vote, for example, in January. For some reason,

2 her term was to vote in January. Is it possible

3 to keep that vote secure throughout the whole year

4 and make a count come November for that upcoming

5 election? Would that be possible? Or, I mean,

6 how would you --

7   MR. MASTERSON: Man, and I thought we

8 had a lot of early voting in Ohio. (Laughter)

9   SPEAKER: So you won't have candidates

10 by then.

11   MR. MASTERSON: Yeah. And so just

12 engaging the hypothetical -- right? -- is what

13 you're presenting? My opinion is yes, because

14 what would happen is, just like you all do all the

15 time, if there was a law passed telling you to do

16 that, you would work through and identify the

17 risks and the mitigations in order to be --

18   What your question really raises, which

19 I think is a really question is: As you look at

20 changes in laws and procedures, one of the things

21 you all have to do is evaluate what new risks

22 enter into the process. And those aren't just

1   security risks. You know, that's part of it. But

2   also the larger risks in the process are

3   human-factor risks, right? What new

4   mess-up/screw-ups does this introduce for my

5   office, for the poll workers, for the voter that

6   can cause this ballot either not count or not

7   reflect the intent of the voter. And so I think

8   if it were a change in law that had people voting

9   in January, I think it would be incumbent on all

10   of us that were impacted to sit there and really

11   think through how would I secure this? What are

12   the risks? How do I mitigate those risks?

13   (Inaudible) but I think you'd find a way to do it,

14   because you need to at that point, and so I think

15   as you look at these general changes to serving

16   voters better, that's the questions that election

17   officials that are implementing these changes are

18   asking themselves: How do we secure a drop box

19   that's sitting out in the public for folks to drop

20   it off? What steps do I need to take to secure

21   that in developing that security plan around it?

22   MS. WHITE: And I can also tag onto his

1   a little bit by saying that, you know, we would

2   secure ballots in the same way we secure them now,

3   by keeping them under -- you know -- we have card

4   access, cameras on our ballot room whether it's in

5   there for 40 days or if it's in there for 10

6   months.

7   But also people don't realize there are

8   also requirements that we keep uncounted ballots

9   so if the provisional was rejected we're required

10   to keep it for

11   months. That ballot, by law, cannot be

12   opened and therefore we have to continue secure

13   ballots for an extended period of time and then

14   destroy them properly. So, those procedures

15   already exist as well for those reasons.

16   MR. VILLAO: Thank you.

17   CHAIR NEUMAN: Time for maybe one or two

18   more questions.

19   MS. HERNANDEZ: Awilda Hernandez from

20   the City of Bowie.

21   Prince George's County does not allow

22   our municipalities to use their poll book, so we

1   struggle with that. My city is the largest in the

2   municipality. Have any other states had issues

3   with using poll books? One of the reasons is

4   because it's -- we tried to do it using the poll

5   books through a vendor of equipment, but they

6   don't want to release the data because of security

7   issues. So, I was just wondering if any other

8   states have had issues with --

9   MR. MASTERSON: With using the poll

10 books?

11   MS. HERNANDEZ: Yes, from -- whether

12 from

13   (inaudible).

14   MR. MASTERSON: Yeah, so that -- oh,

15 man.

16   MS. HERNANDEZ: (Inaudible) go about

17 doing.

18   MR. MASTERSON: Yeah. The answer is not

19 that I know of, but let me get back to you. Like,

20 let me see if I can dig around a little bit to

21 find similar situations like that to see if I can

22 get you some help.

1   MS. HERNANDEZ: That's one of the issues

2   with -- at least for us -- to get people moving

3   fast, because we get cards. So, you have to,

4   like, have my poll workers manually go digging

5   through little cards for that person's name and,

6   you know, give it to them and all that, where the

7   poll books - - you know, you just type in an it's

8   right there.

9   MR. MASTERSON: Yeah.

10   MS. HERNANDEZ: So, you know, that for

11   me -- at our last election that was one of the

12   biggest complaints from my voters, right?

13   MR. MASTERSON: Sure.

14   MS. HERNANDEZ: The process of voting

15   went smoothly, but it was the process of just the

16   checking in.

17   MR. MASTERSON: Yup.

18   MS. HERNANDEZ: I mean, I had some

19   places the lines were going out the door.

20   MR. MASTERSON: Yeah. So, I --

21   MS. HERNANDEZ: (Inaudible) frustrated.

22   MR. MASTERSON: You actually just made

1   me think of another cool customer service

2   innovation that may help you as well, and then I

3   will get back to you if I can think of an example.

4   But that is, to the extent that you have lines,

5   one of the ways to improve the experience and

6   mitigate lines is to have line walkers go out and

7   simply look up to make sure that the voters are in

8   the right place before they ever get in there to

9   check in. One, it helps get those voters out of

10   that line, so you shorten your line. Two, it

11   doesn't waste their time until they get into the

12   check-in spot. And, three, it means you have less

13   provisional voters -- right? -- that are standing

14   there, and that's just simple line walking. And

15   so even if you don't have the poll books, assuming

16   that there's some sort of tool to be able to look

17   where the voters registered on the state website

18   or county website, you can have line walkers at

19   least go out and begin to ask folks, you know, to

20   make sure that they're in the right place and at

21   the right plan. That's just a simple customer

22   service step that you could take, and I know

1   jurisdictions that have done it have had

2   incredible success improving their lines but also

3   improving the customer experience on that. And

4   then I'll get back to you. Your question's a good

5   one.

6   MS. HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

7   CHAIR NEUMAN: Going once, twice?

8   MR. MASTERSON: Can I say something

9   before you --

10   CHAIR NEUMAN: Anyone -- do you have

11   anything else to add?

12   MR. MASTERSON: Ladies first.

13   SPEAKER: No, no, I have nothing.

14   MR. MASTERSON: Are you sure?

15   SPEAKER: Yes, go right ahead.

16   MR. MASTERSON: Well, I always -- when

17   I'm in a room with election officials, I do like

18   to close with, and that is a thank you. Election

19   officials, when everything goes right are told:

20   Well, yeah, that was your job; of course it went

21   right. And when everything goes wrong, you're

22   asked a million questions or even when something

1   is perceived to have gone wrong and it didn't.

2   And so you all deserve to hear a thank you for the

3   incredible work you do serving democracy.

4   You know, the reason this process works

5   is because you all are so diligent in engaging in

6   these details and grinding through these

7   nitty-gritty -- and someone that just kind of fell

8   into this work, this line of work. You either

9   love it or you leave it really quickly, because it

10   is a grind, right? And so thank you for your

11   incredible work, what you do to serve the voters

12   in your jurisdiction. You all don't hear it

13   enough, and it's so critically important. So,

14   let's -- thank you for what you do.

15   CHAIR NEUMAN: And thank you, and thank

16   you both as well.

17   There is food. Please help yourself

18   before you leave. And both Matt and Jessica are

19   still here. If you want to talk with them

20   informally, please feel free. Thank you all very

21   much for coming, and we to see you again for the

22   third forum. Have a safe trip home.

1   MR. MASTERSON: Thank you for organizing

2   this.

3   (Applause)

4   (Whereupon, at 9:00 p.m., the

5   CONFERENCE was adjourned.)

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2   I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby

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